Health and Social Care Supplement

New staff at Voluntary Action Westminster

NEIL ORR
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PROJECT

In August I started as the new Health and Social Care Project Worker at Voluntary Action Westminster, replacing Corinna Little. The post has been funded for a further two years by Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority and Westminster City Council, with the principle aims including:

- ensuring the effective involvement of the voluntary sector in the planning of health and social services;
- ensuring effective communication between the voluntary sector in Westminster, KCW HA and Westminster Social Services;
- encouraging partnerships and joint working between the voluntary sector and the statutory sector.

My previous experience includes information and development work on HIV, and on children's health, in both health authorities and the voluntary sector. Most recently I worked at the National Children's Bureau coordinating the National Forum on AIDS and Children.

A current priority is assisting with the Joint Finance programme for 1997/98. The role of VAW within this includes helping voluntary organisations develop proposals for funding, and to support applications from the voluntary sector when they are considered at the Joint Care Planning Team and elsewhere. If you have submitted a proposal for Joint Finance this year it would be useful if you could contact me so that VAW will be properly briefed and able to put the best possible case for your application.

I am also trying to visit as many voluntary organisations as I can to find out what services they provide, and what their concerns are about health and social services in Westminster. If I haven't had time to contact you yet, please do not hesitate to call me.

CATHERINE FLYNN
USER INVOLVEMENT PROJECT

Developing effective user and carer consultation across Westminster is the challenge I have before me as VAW's newly appointed User Involvement Worker. Funded since August for two years by Joint Finance, my work will entail:

- working with the planners of services (JPTs) to develop and improve their consultation strategies;
- supporting user groups in Westminster, and keeping them informed;
- working with organisations on pilot projects for involving service users and/or carers.

Past experience of supporting a self-advocacy organisation for people with learning difficulties in Southwark tells me that this is not something that can be achieved by my efforts alone. So, in the spirit of involvement and inclusion, I will be drawing on the knowledge, skills and ideas of the many people who *plan, work for* or *use* health and social care services in Westminster. A small Advisory Group made up of service users, carers and workers will inform and guide the work of the project. Interested people can contact me at VAW during September.

As a starting point, I am researching previous and ongoing user and carer consultation in Westminster, and would like to speak to anyone who has direct knowledge of any such activities. Aware that *consultation* and *involvement* are much contested concepts, I am happy to hear of anything you think could be covered by these headings. These may be large scale events organised by JPTs, or small-scale, ongoing work within a provider organisation.

I am also gathering information on the range of user groups operating across the Borough, and would be grateful for any contact names or numbers.

Current readers can learn more about my work or tell me about theirs by calling me at VAW.

Neil Orr and Catherine Flynn have their own direct line at Voluntary Action Westminster. If you wish to contact either of them please call 0171 724 1143, Monday to Friday.

Funding

Voluntary and community groups with an interest in health are being invited to bid for funding for research and development projects on health issues that are particularly relevant to the inner city. The *North Thames Inner City Health Research and Development Project* has £1 million available to fund projects in inner city areas of London, including Westminster.

In the past voluntary and community groups have been hindered by a lack of academic research experience. The North Thames regional office of the NHS Executive have commissioned the College of Health to facilitate community involvement by promoting partnerships between voluntary and community groups and academic bodies. So if a voluntary group has an idea that fits in with the scheme's priorities, the College of Health will match them with an academic with the necessary research skills.

The closing date for outline bids is 9 October 1996.

For further information contact: Richard Wiles, the College of Health, St Margaret's House, 21 Old Ford Road, London E2 9PL (tel. 0181 983 1225).

Camden and Westminster Citizen Advocacy

Joanna Bell has just been appointed to extend the Citizen Advocacy scheme in Westminster for adults with learning disabilities and severe communication difficulties.

Citizen Advocacy links a member of the community on a one-to-one basis with someone who has not got a natural advocate. In addition to befriending, and extending opportunities for this person, the advocate will ensure that their views are expressed and heard so that people have a real say in the direction of their own lives.

If you are interested in volunteering, or know someone who may benefit from an advocate - or indeed would just like to know more about the project - please call Joanna on 0171 289 5051, or write to her at 380 Harrow Road, London W9 2HU.

Resources

- Sense: the National Deafblind and Rubella Association has launched an advocacy learning pack, *Do the right thing*, to enable people with severe communication difficulties to get involved in the decisions that shape their lives. Sense has also set up an Advocacy Development Network to further advocacy for deafblind and multiply-disabled people. Details on 0171 272 7774, fax 0171 272 6012.

- Services for people with dementia tend to be geared towards older people, yet significant numbers of people develop symptoms of dementia under the age of 65. *The care must be there: improving services for people with young onset dementia and their families* is a new report from the Dementia Relief Trust. It is based on interviews with carers of people with young onset dementia and their families, and examines their needs and experiences of services in Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea. To obtain a free single copy of this 110 page report send an A4 SAE (£1.05) to the Dementia Relief Trust, Pegasus House, 37-43 Sackville Street, London W1X 2DL (tel. 0171 333 8115).

Annual Community Care Public Consultation Event

Westminster City Council and KCW Health Authority will be holding a community care consultation event on Thursday 28th November from 2:30 to 5:30 pm (venue to be confirmed). This will provide an opportunity for service users, carers and the voluntary sector to put across their views about health and social services in Westminster.

The event will consist of two parts. During the first half, there will be a variety of information stalls from health agencies, Council departments and the voluntary sector. There will be an opportunity to ask questions, raise concerns and to take away information.

This will be followed by a public meeting where you will be able to address your questions and comments directly to the people who make the major decisions about health and social services in Westminster.

The full programme will be included in the next issue of *Current*.

Westminster Health Network

The Westminster Health Network is a multi agency alliance consisting of representatives from statutory and voluntary sector agencies based in Westminster who have an interest in health and health promotion issues. The Network currently focuses on:

- information sharing;
- skills development;
- planning and developing new initiatives;
- identifying and meeting shared training needs;
- sharing resources and ideas;
- distribution of other agencies newsletters etc.

At the next meeting of the Network, Paul Nethercott, Health Promotion Advisor for HIV/Sexual Health, KCW Department of Professional Advice and Health Promotion will be talking about :

WORLD AIDS DAY
(1 December 1996)

Paul will be informing the meeting about the big day, the slogan and the logo, as well as making suggestions for local activities. There will be an opportunity to discuss the planning and organisation of your World AIDS Day event.

The meeting will take place on Monday 21 October 1996 at Lisson Grove Health Centre, Gateforth Street, London NW8 8EG, starting at 2:00 pm. If you are interested in coming along please contact Maisie McKenzie at KCW Health Promotion (0171 725 3333).

Respite survey for carers launched

Carers Network Westminster, in conjunction with Westminster Carers Forum, is circulating a questionnaire to gather carers' views on respite services for older people. If you are in contact with carers who might like to comment on respite services for older people, please get in touch with Di Robertson at CNW on 0171 932 0045.

New HIV & STD Clinic

Parkside Health, in partnership with St Mary's Hospital NHS Trust, has launched Exmoor Clinic, a new outpatient's clinic for local people needing help, advice and treatment for HIV and STDs (sexually transmitted diseases).

The Clinic is based at St Charles Hospital, Exmoor Street, W10 and is one of the first clinics of its kind to be opened in the community, a direct response to national calls for more sites where people can have HIV and STD tests and treatment.

Clients can receive free, friendly and confidential advice as well as practical help with the treatment of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Dr Libby Clayton of the new Exmoor Clinic says: "We wanted to bring a service to people in recognition that they do not always want to travel. In particular, those who live locally, work locally, have young children and those who use the services at Ramede Clinic nearby."

Clinics are by appointment and anyone interested in finding out more about the services on offer, or wishing to make an appointment, should contact St Charles Hospital Outpatients Department on 0181 962 4241/4242.

Health Information Service

KCW Health Authority partly funds a freephone telephone information service for the public which provides information on such matters as:

- waiting times for treatment;
- common illnesses;
- how to keep healthy;
- patient charter standards;
- advice on how to complain about health services;
- self-help and support groups.

If you have any questions about health or health services, please ring:

Freephone 0800 66 55 44,
9:00 am - 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday.

News in brief

Health Promotion is on the move...

Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority Department of Professional Advice and Health Promotion is moving. From 18 September 1996 its new address will be 50 Eastbourne Terrace, London W2 6LX (tel. 0171 725 3333, fax. 0171 725 3455).

... and so is Social Services Complaints

The Social Services Inspection, Complaints and Quality Assurance Unit (previously based at 33 Tachbrook Street) has moved to new premises at 20 Rochester Row, SW1P 1BS. If you require details call 0171 798 3179.

New Dental Health Educator

Riverside Community Health Care NHS Trust has a new Dental Health Educator, Allison Fraser (replacing Pearl Darrel). One of her roles will be working in the Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster area in clubs, centres and homes. Alison can be contacted at the, Dental Department, Violet Melchett Clinic, 30 Flood Walk, SW3 (tel. 0181 846 6694).

Lighthouse wins HIV contract

London Lighthouse has won a three-year contract to provide personal care, housework and cleaning for residents of Westminster living with HIV/AIDS. According to *Voluntary Voice*, this is probably the first time an HIV/AIDS voluntary agency has won a local authority contract through competitive tender. London Lighthouse, 111-117 Lancaster Road, W11 (tel. 0171 792 1200).

Events

KCW Department of Professional Advice and Health Promotion (tel. 0171 221 3307) have a number of courses arranged:

- September 19: Running a high profile event, 9:30-4:30.
- September 27: Motivating change with clients: one-to-one, 9:30-4:30.
- October 14: Promoting health together. An introduction to working with KCW Department of Professional Advice and health promotion, 1:30 - 4:40 pm.
- October 21-22: Self-esteem health choices: assertiveness skills, 9:30-4:30.
- October 24: Getting the message across: planning the teaching/learning process, 9:30-4:30.

AGE TAKES CENTRE STAGE

KCW Health Authority have arranged a week of older people's events, Age takes centre stage, in Victoria. Events in the week will be as follows:

- Monday 28 October: 11.00 am - launch of event at Churchill Gardens Estate Tenants Hall, aimed at professionals working with older people locally.
- Monday 28 October, afternoon - information and health promotion workshop for older residents of Churchill Gardens Estate.
- Tuesday 29 - Thursday 30 October: visits to local facilities and services for older people for workers from voluntary and statutory sector.
- Friday 1 November: information and health promotion workshop on Tachbrook Estate.

For further details, please contact Katherine Woolley, Community Development and Liaison Manager, KCW HA (0171 725 3329).

Seminar on heart disease

The Arab Health Care Foundation are holding a seminar in Arabic to raise awareness of heart disease and how to prevent it. The seminar will feature Dr Al Abasi, Consultant Physician in Cardiology and Belinda Linden from the British Heart Foundation. The seminar, which is open to both women and men, will take place from 5:00 - 7:00 pm on Saturday 14th September at Kufa Gallery, 26 Westbourne Grove, London W2 (admission free). For further information, call Miss Altimimi, Arab Health Care Foundation, PO Box 11658, London NW1 5ZH (tel. 0171 723 3858).

Health and Social Care Supplement

World Mental Health Day (10 October) was established by the World Federation for Mental Health in 1992. The theme of the Day this year is "positive images, positive steps", with the campaign aiming to raise mental health awareness, promote positive images of mental health, and to encourage everyone to take positive steps to improve their own mental well-being and that of others. To mark World Mental Health Day, this issue of the Health and Social Care supplement includes several items on mental health in Westminster.

Mental health in Westminster

Nationally, one in seven adults experience a serious mental health problem at some time in their life. In Westminster there are high levels of mental health needs and a rising demand for services.

- In Westminster an estimated 18,000 people with mental health needs will have required support from primary health care services during 1996;
- 1400 people with a severe and enduring mental illness were identified in the most recent local census (this figure is likely to be an underestimate);
- The local rate of schizophrenia is nearly seven per thousand, compared to a national prevalence rate of two to five per thousand;
- A high number of people with mental health needs in Westminster are homeless;
- Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster has one of the highest rates of recorded suicides in the country.

Westminster Mental Health Advocacy Project - Jonathan Coe

I have recently started as the new mental health advocacy worker, based at VAW, succeeding Cherry Pedlar. The project has received funding from KCW Health Authority and the City Council to run an expanded service consisting of two full-time advocacy workers and a part time administrator.

Advocacy support will be available to any person using or needing to use any of the mental health services in Westminster: day and social facilities as well as hospital units. The focus of the work will be on mental health provision with service users themselves deciding on the level of involvement they need from us. This can be about simply providing information on services and rights, for example on the Mental Health Act and community care legislation, right through to full representation, for instance at ward rounds or hospital managers' appeal hearings.

Advocacy is about empowering people to be more able to exercise choice and assert their rights; it is for the service user to decide at what point they want to use our service and how much they want us to do. We will take no action on behalf of individuals without being asked to do so by them. If we are asked to undertake tasks appropriate to other agencies we will help users to get in touch with the right people. We will not act as 'pseudo social workers' or counsellors or benefits advisors etc.

Currently managed by VAW, the service aims eventually to become an independently constituted and run agency. We are now looking for people committed to the principle and practice of advocacy who are interested in supporting the project by becoming members of the Advisory Committee. These positions are open to anyone with experience or interest in mental health and particularly people who have used mental health services themselves.

If you are interested in this or any other matter related to the project please get in touch with me at VAW. on 0171-724 5802. I will be visiting local projects over the next few weeks and hope to be ready to open the service in mid November.

Citizens' Juries' verdict on Mental Health

Recommendations from two Citizens' Juries on mental health were presented to the Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority Board Meeting on 9 October. The Juries, piloted by the Institute of Public Policy Research on behalf of KCW HA and Riverside Mental Health Trust, were held in June and July. 30 local people, selected to reflect the age, gender and social class balance of KCW's catchment area, were asked to respond to the question:

> *'People with mental illness live in the community: what can be done to improve the quality of life for mental health service users, carers and their neighbours?'.*

Over four days, jurors heard testimony from professionals working in the field of mental health, from service users, carers and from people living near to mental health facilities. Recommendations from the Juries included:

- more close liaison between agencies and professionals in the mental health field;
- improved crisis facilities - a 24-hour drop-in and helpline;
- direct and honest consultation with the local community.

Jury One drew particular attention to the need for more services for black people, while the second Jury called for an active campaign to raise public awareness of mental health issues.

The Health Authority's draft response welcomed the Juries' reports, and outlined its proposed actions in relation to accommodation, inter-agency communication, crisis services, training of professionals, respite, gender- and minority ethnic-sensitive services and the national context. This will include looking into funding and operational aspects of out of hours services and stimulating the more rapid development of multi-disciplinary community mental health teams. The Health Promotion Department was particularly keen to develop a mental health education programme in schools in the coming year. A more detailed response and progress report will be presented at the March/ April meeting of the Health Authority.

The Citizens' Jury model, developed in Germany and the US, remains in Britain an unfamiliar tool in the repertoire of techniques available to services that seek to extend public participation in decision-making. To date, the Institute of Public Policy Research has piloted Juries with 3 Health Authorities, including KCW. Pilots in local authorities are being funded by the Local Government Management Board.

Arising from the pilots are questions concerning the process itself: how many jurors should there be? how should they be selected? what information - if any - do they need before the 'trial' begins? on what basis and by whom are witnesses chosen? what methods of voting will be applied? and what is the status of a Jury's 'verdict'?

Other issues that have generated debate have included the expense of running a Jury (estimated at between £15,000 - £16,000), and the place of Citizens' Juries relative to other consultative strategies. Relevant in this respect is the consideration that Citizens' Juries represent consultation with the public rather than with service users or their carers, and that they are a one-off event rather than an ongoing process. While it is agreed that Juries enable ordinary members of the public to become better informed about specific service issues (mental health in Westminster's case), the benefits to Health Authorities - and to mental health service users - have yet to be established.

This pilot of the Citizens' Jury model is to be evaluated by the King's Fund. Further information is available from Geoff Shepherd at KCW HA on 0171 725 3286.

Catherine Flynn

Dance as a healing therapy

The Somali Community Information Centre held a one day Mingis ceremony on October 9th. Mingis is a traditional Somali ritual dance performed as a form of therapy to treat mental health problems. It is usually performed by women to treat individual or group patients who can be women, men or young adults. The therapy combines Somali food, aromas, and colours as well as dance to enhance the treatment.

For further information contact the Somali Community Information Centre (0181 964 4540, fax 0181 964 2981).

Mental Health Strategy

Both Westminster City Council and KCW HA have identified improving mental health services as their top priority in community care.

Together with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, they have been working towards a joint adult mental strategy providing a framework for the planning and commissioning of mental health services.

An initial document issued in November 1995 provided a focus for consultation throughout the Spring and Summer of 1996. Further comments are welcomed, with the three Authorities planning to issue an amended strategy in December 1996.

For further information, please contact Lorna Haddow Commissioning Manager (Mental Health), KCW HA (0171 725 3328) or Graham Tweedale, Commissioning and Development Manager (Mental Health), Westminster Social Services (0171 798 2430).

New at WAMH - African Caribbean Flexicare

With African Caribbean people forming a disproportionately high number of mental health service users, the need for culturally sensitive services is very much a live issue in Westminster, and one that has been continually raised during consultation. While some people of African Caribbean origin integrate well into and benefit from existing services, others are left feeling alienated and poorly served.

To address the needs of those people who do not relate well to mainstream services, Westminster Association for Mental Health has just finished training 23 black Flexicarers. Building on the work of the existing Flexicare team, these sessional workers will provide a mixture of befriending and practical help to people both in their own homes and in other settings. Clients will all be black people with severe and enduring mental health problems, with the ratio of African Caribbean to other black people reflecting that among the users of local mental health services.

Referrals will be via Care Managers, and the project has been Joint Financed for two years. For further information, contact Christina East or Baffour Ababio at WAMH on 0181 964 9454.

Mental Health resources

- The Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health has published a report on a two-year evaluation of four different models of care management. Copies of *Care Management: Is It Working?* are available at £8.50 from 0171 403 8790.

- Young people's knowledge, attitudes and behaviour regarding mental health were the subject of a national survey of 1853 young people aged 11 - 24 carried out in England for the Health Education Authority in March 1996. The report, *Mental Health Awareness in Young People: Key Findings from a National Survey*, is available from Mary Tidyman (Project Manager - Mental Health), WMHD, Health Education Authority, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9TX. Tel. 0171 387 0550.

- *Contact: A Directory for Mental Health* contains information on over 160 organisations providing services open to all people and also on specialist help for children, older people, black and ethnic minorities and women. This pocket-sized booklet, along with a 1996 update, is available free from: Department of Health, PO Box 410, Wetherby, LS23 7LN.

Funding : Health promotion grants

Westminster Healthy Alliances Joint Planning Team have obtained £5000 from Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority to provide one-off grants to support innovative health promotion projects coordinated by two or more voluntary organisations in Westminster. The funding may be used to support small scale projects such as:

- developing a local resource, such as a poster or a leaflet;
- organising a conference;
- hiring a consultant for a training event.

If you would like to make an application for a small grant of no more than £500, please submit a summary proposal on one side of an A4 page to Maisie McKenzie, Healthy Alliances Development Manager, Health Promotion, 50 Eastbourne Terrace, London W2 6LX. The funding is available until 31 March 1997. For further information please contact Maisie McKenzie on 0171 725 3436.

Lifescreen - calling all women

KCW HA are launching a new video/ teaching pack to promote breast health. Lifescreen - Calling all Women aims to give women of all ages an exciting and safe way to explore their own attitudes, values and beliefs around breast screening and breast awareness.

The video follows the story of two women and their reactions to receiving an invitation for breast screening, providing lots of information in an accessible and informative way. The teaching pack provides supporting information for facilitators on breast health, and activities to assist women discuss the issues raised in the video.

The video/teaching pack will be available free of charge to groups in Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster. Voluntary organisations and other community workers are invited to a training workshop to receive guidance on using the video, and a complementary copy of the pack. The workshop will take place on Friday 25 October 1996, 10:00 - 12:30 at KCW HA, Room 306, 50 Eastbourne Terrace, London W2 6LX. For further information please contact Nikki Cannon, KCW Health Promotion (tel. 0171 725 3424, fax. 0171 725 3455).

KCW HA Health Promotion sessions

Alcohol awareness: two lunchtime sessions for individuals interested in alcohol awareness are being held, on November 7th and 14th. An ideas and information pack to support local alcohol initiatives will be distributed. Information from Claire Wright (0171 725 3436).

World AIDS Day: voluntary sector professionals are invited to two-hour sessions designed to give an update on national and local HIV statistics and an insight into the KCW response. The dates are Friday 1st, Monday 4th and Wednesday 6th November. Further details from Sheron Pusey on 0171 725 3419.

Launch of new Westminster Forum for Senior Residents

10.30 am, December 4th at the Council House, Marleybone Road. Deputy Lord Mayor, Cllr Keane, will be the opening speaker.

Annual Community Care Public Consultation Event

Westminster City Council and Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority are joining forces on Thursday November 28th to hear what local people have to say about health and social services in Westminster. The public meeting, to be held at City Hall, 17th floor, 64 Victoria Street, will be chaired this year by BBC Health Correspondent Fergus Walsh. Fergus will take questions from the floor and direct them at the people in power. In the hot seats are:

from KCW HA	Sir Thomas Boyd-Carpenter (Chair) John James (Chief Exec)
from City Council	Julie Jones (Director, Social Services) Alex Segal (Chair, Social Services Committee)

The meeting starts at 2.30pm and will be followed by the chance to visit stalls providing information on statutory services, including community care and health care, complaints, charges for Social Services, the Drug Action Team and the Physical Disability Business Unit. Carers' Network Westminster and VAW will also have stalls. Voluntary organisations wishing to display information at the VAW stall should contact Neil Orr at VAW.

Included with this mailout are documents from KCW HA and WCC on key issues and expected changes in health and community care services for the forthcoming year. Both authorities have stated that they wish to encourage year-round comments and consultation on services. However, as this is the time when detailed financial plans are being developed for next year, readers might wish to use the public consultation event to raise specific issues arising from these documents.

We welcome comments about the Health and Social Care Supplement, and contributions of news items or articles. Future issues of the supplement will focus on disability (November) and HIV/AIDS (December)

Health and Social Care Supplement

Disability in Westminster

Tuesday 3 December is European Day of Disabled People, a focus for the campaigning activities of many of Europe's 37 million disabled people. This month's supplement draws together local information and news on disability issues, and gives an overview of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, some of which comes into effect from 2 December.

Of Westminster's population of 185,000 it is estimated that there are 7,500 adults under 65 who have a moderate to severe physical disability. In March 1995, the number of adults under 65 years old who were registered on the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons' Register was around 4,400 (Community Care Plan 1996-1999).

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)

Rubina Hassanali, Disability Policy Officer at Westminster City Council, writes for Current...

Although short of the full civil rights legislation disabled people wanted, the DDA provides the right for disabled people not to be discriminated against in employment and the right of access to goods, facilities and services. The Act has wide-ranging implications for disabled people, employers and service providers.

The Act is being phased in and implemented over a period of time with the employment provisions coming into force on 2nd December 1996. Many of the Act's provisions may be changed by Government regulations. The Government has produced two Codes of Practice, covering Employment and Access to Goods, Services and Facilities. The interpretation of the Act will be determined by test cases which will establish legal precedent.

Definition of Disability

The DDA defines disability as 'a physical or mental impairment which has a long term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. This is wider than just physical disability and includes, for instance, sensory loss, learning disability and severe disfigurement.

Normal day-to-day activities include mobility, manual dexterity, physical co-ordination and the ability to lift, carry or move everyday objects.

Employment Provisions

From 2 December 1996:

- an employer must not discriminate against a disabled applicant in recruitment and selection or in the terms on which employment is offered.
- An employer must not discriminate against a disabled employee in promotion, training, transfer, or by subjecting them to any other detriment.

An employer is also required to make 'reasonable adjustments' which includes making adjustments to premises; allocating some of the disabled person's duties to another person; altering the disabled persons working hours; allowing the disabled person to be absent during working hours for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment; acquiring or modifying equipment; and providing a reader or interpreter.

These provisions only apply to organisations employing 20 or more employees, and to employment within the UK. They do not apply to employment on board a ship, aircraft or hovercraft.

Discrimination in employment means treating a disabled person less favourably for a reason relating to the disabled person's disability without justification, or failing to comply with the duty to make adjustments, without justification.

Justification could include the extent to which the step is practicable for the employer to take; the extent to which the step would prevent the effect and the financial and other costs that would be incurred.

Goods, Services and Facilities

It will be unlawful for a provider of goods, services or facilities to discriminate against a disabled person,
- by refusing to provide or deliberately not providing services or facilities normally provided to members of the public;
- by making it unreasonably difficult for a disabled person to receive the goods services or facilities, or by failing to comply with any duty to make adjustments;
- in the standard of goods, services or facilities provided to disabled people, or the manner in which they are provided; and
- in the terms on which the goods, services, or facilities are provided to the disabled person.

Prohibitions only apply to providers in the UK to the public or a section of the public. It is irrelevant whether the service is paid for or not. Like the Employment provisions they also apply to non-disabled people who are victimised for helping disabled people. Similar definitions of 'Discrimination' and 'Justification' apply.

Examples of services to which the prohibitions apply include:
- access to and the use of any place which members of the public are permitted to attend;
- access to and the use of means of communication;
- access to and the use of information services;
- accommodation in a hotel, boarding house or other similar establishment;
- facilities for entertainment, recreation or refreshment;
- facilities by way of banking, insurance or finance;
- facilities provided by employment agencies;
- the services of any profession or trade or any local or other public authority.

There is also a duty to make adjustments in the provision of these goods, services and facilities. These provisions come into force on 2 December 1996.

The DDA also covers Premises, Enforcement, Transport provisions and Education provisions. It also establishes a National Disability Council whose brief is to advise the Government on disability issues, although it has no powers of enforcement or investigation.

The Act is being phased in over a number of years with the right to auxiliary aids not coming in until at least 1998 and the right to physical adjustments to premises not expected until 2006.

Rubina Hassanali, Disability Policy Officer, Westminster City Council, phone 0171 798 2948 (voice and minicom).

Disability Discrimination Act - Training for voluntary sector employees

VAW is hosting a briefing meeting on the implications of the DDA for the voluntary sector, with Rubina Hassanali and Judith Graham of Disability Action Westminster. The DDA applies to all organisations, not just those working with disabled people. The session runs from 2-4.30pm on 12 December at VAW, 37 Chapel Street. A booking form is enclosed.

Disability news

● **European Day of Disabled People.** The City of Westminster and voluntary organisations come together on 3 December to mark this day and to bring you up to date on the DDA and other issues. You can also visit stalls from a wide range of disability organisations. The event is at the Queen Mother Sports Hall, Vauxhall Bridge Rd, SW1, from 3-6pm.

● **Review of Children's Services.** KCW Health Authority Disability Commissioning Group is inviting tenders for a review of community support services for children with permanent and substantial disabilities in Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster. For further information, contact Ingrid Horgan on 0171 361 2437. The closing date for tenders is 30 November 1996.

● **Disability Information and Advice.** Enclosed with this month's *Current* is a flyer prepared by the Disability Information Group which lists telephone numbers for disability information and advice in Westminster. More flyers are available from Julie Ryder, Community Care Manager at Westminster Libraries on 0171 648 4893.

Electric Powered Indoor/Outdoor Chairs

In February 1996 Ministers announced the introduction of new funding so that electric powered indoor/outdoor wheelchairs (EPIOCs) could be provided to some severely disabled people by the National Health Service. Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority has been working with the local wheelchair service and other Health Authorities to put in place the arrangements required for implementation and the service is expected to start screening and assessing people in December 1996. Common eligibility criteria have been agreed across the North Thames Region.

Eligibility Criteria

The client will be of any age and will:

- be permanently restricted in mobility and unable to walk/self propel a wheelchair affectively within the home
- have had a full wheelchair assessment for either a manual wheelchair or an electrically powered indoor chair
- have the potential to benefit from, and have permanent need for, an EPIOC which will increase mobility and lead to functional independence outside the home
- be clinically fit and be safely aware of the environment to independently control an EPIOC. This decision would be based on a specialist clinical assessment and subject to review dependant on the individual's clinical requirements. The assessment will include: cognitive ability; physical ability; visual acuity; hearing; spatial awareness; and a wheelchair proficiency test• meet the occupant weight limit as stated in the manufacturers' specification
- have a suitable home environment which will include adequate storage space for the EPIOC with a power supply for a battery charger and adequate space for movement of the wheelchair within the home;
- agree and comply with the conditions of loan.

Wheelchair users who think they may meet these criteria should contact: Parkside Wheelchair Services 0181 451 8048, or ask their GP, Care Manager or Occupational Therapist to make a referral.

The initial screening assessment will be undertaken by the local service. If a person is thought to be eligible, they will be referred to the Disablement Services Centre at Stanmore for a specialist clinical assessment including a wheelchair proficiency test to ensure that they will be safe with the chair. People who receive chairs will also receive training in their own environment when the chair is delivered.

A local information sheet on how to access the service, what the clinical assessment would include and advice regarding insurance and breakdown services is also being planned.

Disability Action Westminster

Disability Action Westminster is the borough disability organisation established to initiate, support and run services in areas where disabled people are at their greatest disadvantage. Membership is open to anyone who lives or works in Westminster. We currently operate the following services:

Disability Information Service: we have two branches providing information and advice on all subjects, including benefits, equipment and employment. We will also be providing advice on the DDA.

Access Project: advice to organisations on access to promises and services. We also support two user groups the Residents Access Group and Residents Planning Group.

Education Subcommittee: looking at issues concerning children with special needs. We also established the Parents Support Group.

For further information contact:
- Phil Corddell, Administrator: Education subcommittee & Membership; Len Kottnitz, Access Officer, tel. 0171 266 2143;
- Judith Graham, Disability Information Service Co-ordinator, tel. 0171 289 2360;
- Delia Lindsey, Disability Information Service, St Mary's Hospital., tel. 0171 706 0543.

Disability Action Westminster, 41 Chippenham Road W9 2AH. DAW is supported by Westminster City Council.

Disability Events

●**Challenging Community Care Charges:** the Greater London Association of Disabled People (GLAD) is holding a conference for disabled people, disability organisations and others on Thursday 28 November from 2-5 pm at 336 Brixton Road, London SW9 7AA. Speakers will be from Haringey Disabilities Consortium, Mencap's Coalition on Charging and RADAR. The cost for organisations is £5, with a £3 charge for individuals. Bookings by Friday 20 November via Brenda Ellis, GLAD, 336 Brixton Road, SW9 7AA, tel. 0171 326 7905.

●**Rights for Disabled People Now** is organising a mass lobby of MPs on Monday 2 December to demonstrate opposition to the Disability Discrimination Act. Rights Now's protest aims to show all political parties that the DDA is 'totally inadequate'. The lobby will start at 2.30 pm at the St. Stephens entrance to the House of Commons. For more information contact Rights Now, tel. 0171 250 3222.

●**What's New in Community Care?** Disability Alliance is running a half-day conference on Wednesday 4 December, from 2.30-4.30pm at The Charity Centre, 24 Stephenson Way, London NW1 2DP. Topics to be covered include: Direct Payments legislation, with Francis Hasler from GLAD; the Carers' (Recognition and Services) Act, with Emily Holzausen from the Carers' National Association; and Local Authority Community Care Charges - what can be done? with speakers from Mencap's Coalition on Charging, Waltham Forest Association of Disabled People and Southwark Disablement Association. The cost is £15 for members and £20 for non-members, and booking forms are available from: Disability Alliance, Universal House, 88-94 Wentworth Street, London E1 7SA, tel. 0171 247 8776.

Advice Workers' Forum

The Advice Workers' Forum is open to any voluntary sector worker in Westminster involved in advice giving. Recent meetings have featured presentations from Soho Family Centre and the Stroke Association (full report in December Current). Future topics will include support for advice workers, and advising refugees. The next meeting is at 2:30 pm on Wednesday 11 December. For further details, call Neil Orr at VAW (0171 7241143).

A Voice for Pensioners in Westminster

The Westminster Senior Citizens' Forum has its Grand Launch on Wednesday 4 December at Council House, Marylebone Road. Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Keen, will chair the event, which will include as speakers on the platform the Chair of Social Services, Councillor Segal, and other leading local politicians. A key note speech on national pensioner issues will be given by Tony Carter, Chair of the Greater London Forum for the Elderly.

Pensioner organisations and individuals across the borough have shown keen interest in the re-establishment of the Forum. Forums for pensioners exist throughout Greater London, acting as umbrella organisations representing the views of pensioners to the local statutory agencies, voluntary bodies and local politicians. The Forums are run, uniquely, by and for pensioners.

The Forum in Westminster will give an active voice to pensioners on a whole range of issues, including community care, housing, transport, leisure and pensions. Cecilia Nichols, one of the new Forum's founder members, says: 'the Forum will bring into focus the aims and aspirations of people interested in the welfare of the pensioners and disabled in the Borough. It will act with them and on their behalf to bring in front of the authorities the disadvantages that so many find in their daily lives. All senior citizens are welcome to join, but we would also like to see younger members of the community bringing to the Forum their ideas on raising the status of the elderly'. All are welcome to the launch which takes place on

Wednesday 4 December 10.30 am
in the Mayor's Reception Suite, Council House
Marylebone Road (next to Marylebone Library)

Further details from Gerry Mahaffey at the Greater London Forum for the Elderly on 0171 383 4008 or Catherine Flynn at VAW on 0171 724 1143.

Community care public consultation - a reminder. Last month's *Current* printed details of Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority and Westminster City Council's Social Services annual public consultation event on 28 November. For those of you who forgot to put it in your diaries, it runs from 2.30-3.30pm at City Hall, with a chance to visit stalls from community care organisations afterwards.

Health and Social Care Supplement

HIV and AIDS and the voluntary sector - Neil Orr

This issue of the Health and Social Care Supplement focuses on HIV to mark World AIDS Day 1996 (1 December), which this year took place in a climate of both optimism and anxiety. There is optimism because recent advances in clinical treatments offer new hope for people living with HIV. On the other hand there is anxiety about how new treatments are to be paid for, and whether this will be at the expense of the range of innovative HIV services developed by the voluntary sector.

HIV: the local picture

Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster has the highest numbers of HIV cases in the UK. In 1995 there were 1195 KCW residents with HIV receiving medical treatment (91% male, 9% female). In addition many people come from other parts of London and beyond to use the services provided by the local centres of excellence at St Mary's and Chelsea & Westminster hospitals. Gay men continue to make up the majority of this population: in 1995/96 69% of newly reported cases of HIV in KCW were accounted for by sexual intercourse between men.

Treatment

In the last year there has been significant progress in the development of drug therapies for HIV. Early indications from trials have shown that combinations of drugs, including recently developed protease inhibitors, can reduce the virus to undetectable levels. This does not amount to a cure for HIV, and the long term impact on health and survival remains to be seen. Nevertheless, this is a major breakthrough.

However, there is concern that levels of funding in the UK are insufficient to meet the costs of new treatment. KCW Health Authority's latest AIDS (Control) Act report notes that "There are already significant additional cost implications of new drug therapies... These costs are likely to increase in 1996/97 as uptake increases". The Terrence Higgins Trust has launched a Denial of Treatment Campaign after finding that in some parts of the country, people with HIV are being denied access to the latest drug treatments because of high costs and lack of clinical expertise.

The two local treatment centres in KCW have led in the provision of combination therapy in Britain, and according to Simon Hall (KCW HA Commissioning Manager, HIV/ AIDS and Substance Misuse): "All people meeting agreed clinical criteria for combination therapy (or any other treatment), and who wish to be on combination therapy, will be able to get this via either of the two hospitals in KCW HA".

Funding

In December 1995, the Department of Health announced that the national HIV treatment and care budget for 1996/97 would be reduced by 7.4% compared with the previous year. One result of this was the decision by KCW HA and other London commissioners to cut funding to some voluntary organisations, two of which - Black HIV/ AIDS Network and Positively Irish Action on AIDS - closed down.

The good news is that this year funding has been increased. An extra £14 million (representing a 7% increase) has been allocated to AIDS treatment and care nationally for 1997/98, and KCW HA has received approximately 7.5%. However this is still not enough to fully cover increasing treatment costs, and difficult choices lie ahead. A user consultation meeting held at Westminster Central Hall in December was posed the question starkly: "Should HIV services be cut to fund new drug treatments?". Health authorities in south London are proposing to cut funding of complementary therapies, and further service cuts are possible.

Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority has also received a doubling of its HIV prevention allocation as part of a move nationally towards a weighting of funding towards areas with more people living with HIV (previously the funding was allocated entirely on a population basis). During the first months of 1997/98, the Health Authority will be producing a Sexual Health Promotion Strategy that will inform future commissioning decisions.

The HIV voluntary sector

HIV voluntary organisations were in the front line of responding to the AIDS emergency in the 1980s and have continued to develop innovative ways of working. However in the event of further cuts, voluntary organisations may be particularly vulnerable. The Inner London Health HIV Commissioners Group (ILHHCG) has been conducting pan-London reviews to identify under/over provision in particular service areas, such as drop-ins, counselling and respite. Decisions on voluntary sector funding arising from these reviews are likely to be announced in mid-January.

KCW Health Authority's AIDS (Control) Act report notes that "The voluntary sector plays a significant role in providing key front line services for people with HIV/AIDS, including residential, in-patient respite and palliative care, counselling, home support and advice services". KCW HA is the largest purchaser of HIV services in the UK, and in 1995/96 funded 20 voluntary organisations to the tune of nearly £700,000 (in addition to London Lighthouse, for which KCW is the main purchaser). Almost all of these organisations are based outside of Westminster, and many operate on a pan-London basis.

KCW HA anticipates increasing its funding to HIV voluntary organisations in 1997/98, although funding of particular services may be reduced as a result of implementing the recommendations of the ILHHCG Service Reviews.

Whether or not new HIV treatments live up to their early promise, HIV is not going away for the foreseeable future. If people do start living longer, they may face years of complex drug treatments and uncertainty, and require long-term support. The challenge now is to ensure that the latest treatments are available to all who need them, and want them, without undermining the infrastructure of support to people with HIV provided in particular by the voluntary sector.

World AIDS Day round up

Voluntary organisations helped to make World AIDS Day a success in Westminster. *Voluntary Action Westminster*, the *Carers' Network*, and the *Core Trust* joined with health workers from Parkside Community Health and St Mary's Hospital to run stalls in Church Street market and Marylebone station.

Two organisations based at Voluntary Action Westminster, the *Uganda Youth Support Group* (0171 723 5453) and the *Somali Advisory Bureau* (0171 724 8011) put on a well-attended event with discussion, music and refreshments.

In the West End voluntary organisations benefited from events in shops, bars and clubs. Virgin megastore and Selfridges raised funds for *Terrence Higgins Trust* (0171 831 0330), the Body Shop for *Body and Soul* (an organisation supporting women and families affected by HIV, 0171 833 4929) and G.A.Y. and the Ku Bar for the *Food Chain* (0171 272 2272), which provides meals for housebound people with HIV. *Children with AIDS Charity* (0171 242 3885) had a fundraiser at the Criterion Theatre.

La Verna House

The La Verna House Project provides special needs housing for people with AIDS who are homeless. The Project has two houses in Westminster, with a total of 12 self-contained flats. Five family flats are in development. The project, which is run by St John's Housing Association, was established in 1987.

La Verna House, Capital House, 20-22 Craven Road, London W2 3PX (tel. 0171 724 5840)

The Advocacy Project

The UK Coalition of People Living with HIV and AIDS receives funding from KCW Health Authority to provide a peer advocacy service for people with HIV. The service can help advocate for people's needs with social services, health services, housing or anyone else. All advocacy work is done by people living with the virus themselves.

The Advocacy Project, UK Coalition of People Living with HIV and AIDS, phone 0171 820 8877.

HIV Services in Westminster

• The **Victoria Clinic for Sexual Health** is a Chelsea & Westminster Healthcare clinic offering same day HIV testing and follow-up care, sexual health check ups and related advice and treatment. There is a men only clinic on Tuesday evenings (5:30 - 7:00 pm). The Victoria Clinic is at 6 Osbert Road, SW1 (off Vauxhall Bridge Road), 0181 746 8066.

CENTRE FOR SEXUAL HEALTH

THE JEFFERISS WING

• The **Jefferiss Wing** at St Mary's Hospital specialises in the diagnosis, treatment and care of people with HIV. Free and confidential advice on HIV and sexual health is available at the Centre for Sexual Health without an appointment. This includes HIV testing, sexual health screening, and free condoms. The Jefferiss Wing is at St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street, W2 (phone 0171 725 6619.)

• **St Mary's Family HIV Service** is one of the leading centres in the UK for the treatment and support of HIV infected children and their families (phone 0171 725 6666).

• **Parkside Health**: Community health services for people with HIV provided by Parkside Health include district nursing, a specialist dietetics and nutrition service, a specialist dental service, health visiting (for children with HIV) and a hospice at home service. For further information, contact Steven Jeffery, Area manager, HIV/AIDS Services (KCW), St Charles Hospital, Exmoor Street, London W10 6DZ (0181 962 4022).

• **Riverside Community Healthcare Trust** provide a range of services to support people living with HIV in their own homes. Most of these are provided through generic services. For further information contact Graham MacDougall, HIV and Palliative Care Coordinator, Richford Gate, Richford Street, W6 7HY (0181 237 2038).

• **Westminster City Council HIV Care Management Team** is responsible for assessing the needs of individuals with HIV and developing a care plan setting out the services required to meet these needs. Contact them at the Social Services Department, Clarence Wing, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street, W2 (0171 725 1027).

New HIV Resources

• **Living Positively** by Christine Hogg is a new guide for parents and carers of children affected by HIV, published by the National Children's Bureau. Developed by the National Forum on AIDS and Children in association with Positively Women and the Paediatric AIDS Resource Centre, it includes advice designed to help parents access the support they and their children need from health, education and social services and other agencies. The guide is available from Book Sales, National Children's Bureau, 8 Wakley Street, London EC1V 7QE (price £6.50 Bureau members, £10.00 non-members). Service users can obtain a free copy from Positively Women, phone 0171 713 0444.

• **Silent Screams: the needs of carers of people with HIV/AIDS** is a new report by Jennifer Lyon, published by London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (available from the Commissioning Unit, 182 King Street, London W6).

• **Condoms and lubes: a users guide is** a new leaflet explaining about condoms and how to use them, produced by Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority Health Promotion (0171 725 3333)

Funding : Health promotion grants

Westminster Healthy Alliances Joint Planning Team have obtained £5000 from Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority to provide one-off grants to support innovative health promotion projects coordinated by voluntary organisations in Westminster. The funding may be used to support small scale projects such as:

- developing a local resource, such as a poster or a leaflet;
- organising a conference;
- hiring a consultant for a training event.

If you would like to make an application for a small grant of no more than £500, please submit a summary proposal on one side of an A4 page to Maisie McKenzie, Healthy Alliances Development Manager, Health Promotion, 50 Eastbourne Terrace, London W2 6LX. The funding is available until 31 March 1997. For further information please contact Maisie McKenzie on 0171 725 3436.

Senior Citizens' Forum starts strongly

Up to ninety people packed Council House, Marylebone on 4 December for the launch of Westminster Senior Citizens' Forum. Peter Brooke MP, Deputy Lord Mayor Cllr Keen and Cllr Karen Buck welcomed the revival of a collective voice for Westminster's pensioners, and wished the Forum success. Messages of support came from Sir John Wheeler MP, Stan Newens MEP, the Chair of Social Services Committee, and from KCW Health Authority.
Questions from the floor put politicians on the spot, with concerns raised about both national and local issues, including the inability of pensions to keep up with prices and the withdrawal of funding from Age Concern Day Centres. The lack of disabled access to Council premises presented itself immediately as an issue for the Forum to take up.

Tony Carter, Chair of the Greater London Forum for the Elderly, spoke about the key role of a forum in representing such views to statutory agencies, voluntary bodies and local politicians, while Gillian Roy of the steering committee encouraged people to sign up at the membership desk. Once the constitution was agreed, the desk was happily inundated with requests for membership forms. The Forum will elect officers at its first Committee meeting in January.

Membership forms are available from Yvonne Arbesfield, 7 Torridon House, Randolph Gardens, NW6 5HP, tel. 0171 328 2725. For other enquiries, contact Gerry Mahaffey at the Greater London Forum for the Elderly on 0171 383 4008 or Catherine Flynn at VAW on 0171 724 1143.

Westminster Health Network

The Westminster Health Network is a multi-agency alliance consisting of representatives from statutory and voluntary agencies with an interest in health promotion issues. The Network has decided to focus its activities on a number of special days in 1997, including No Smoking Day (12 March), Carers Week (9-15 June) and World Mental Health Day (10 October). If you are interested in working collaboratively on these and other issues, come along to the next meeting at 2:00 pm on 27 January 1996 at Lisson Grove Health Centre (contact Oma Ramroop, 0171 724 2391).

Advice Workers Forum

The October meeting of the Advice Workers Forum featured a presentation from Sandra Henderson about the work of the Stroke Association Dysphasic Support service. Many people become dysphasic after a stroke, having difficulty in speaking and/or understanding language, and often difficulty in reading or writing.

The Dysphasic Support service provides home visiting, group meetings and social events. Its aim is to help dysphasic stroke people attain maximum possible recovery and become as independent as possible. The Stroke Association welcomes volunteers. There is a particular shortage of volunteers from minority ethnic communities. For further information contact Betty Sutherland, Dysphasic Support Organiser, 0181 748 7016.

The Advice Workers Forum is open to any voluntary sector worker in Westminster involved in advice giving. The next meeting is at 2:30 pm on 29 January 1997 and will include an update from Duncan Lane, London Advice Services Alliance, on the situation facing refugees and asylum seekers. Details from Neil Orr (0171 724 1143).

Children's Services Meetings

Westminster City Council with KCW Health Authority are holding a Consultation Meeting for the Voluntary Sector on the Children's Services Plan. The meeting will take place on Thursday January 23rd 1997, 2:00 - 4:00 pm at the Abbey Community Centre, 34 Great Smith Street, SW1P. The Plan will set out how social services and other local agencies intend to meet the needs of children in the next three years. This meeting will provide an opportunity for voluntary organisations to hear more about the Children's Services Plan, and to make their own suggestions about its contents. For further information see the flyer distributed with this mailout, or call Liz Hill (Westminster Social Services, 0171 798 2464).

Prior to this meeting, Voluntary Action Westminster will be holding a meeting just for voluntary organisations to consider our response to the draft plan. This will take place at VAW at 10.00 am on Friday 16th January. Contact Neil Orr at VAW (0171 724 1143) for further details.

**December 1996 - Published by Voluntary Action Westminster, 37 Chapel Street, NW1 5DP, tel. 0171 724 1143.
Edited by Neil Orr (Health and Social Care Worker) and Catherine Flynn (User Involvement Worker).**

Westminster Health and Social Care

Westminster Drug Action Team

This issue of Westminster Health and Social Care focuses on the work of the Drug Action Team, and on drug services in Westminster.

Like any covert activity, accurate information about the level of drug use is hard to come by. In many respects the pattern of drug use in Westminster reflects the experience elsewhere but there are specific features, including:

• Westminster has a significant homeless and rough sleeping population, amongst whom there is a relatively high prevalence of dual diagnosis, i.e. people having both mental health needs and drug and alcohol problems;

• people from all over the world come to Westminster to enjoy the nightlife, with dance venues such as clubs and bars being associated with recreational drug use.

Tackling Drugs Together

Work on drug use is informed by the Government's national strategy, Tackling Drugs Together, launched in 1995. The local response to this strategy is coordinated by the Westminster Drug Action Team, which includes senior representatives from KCW Health Authority, Westminster Social Services, Education, Crime Prevention, the Police and the Probation Service. It aims:

• to increase the safety of communities in Westminster from drug-related crime and decrease the associated levels of fear of crime;
• to reduce the acceptability and availability of drugs to young people;
• to reduce the health risks and other damage arising from drug misuse.

Local initiatives

Drug education: the Drug Action Team is working closely with Westminster Drug Education Forum. The Forum includes statutory and voluntary agencies as well as local schools and aims to develop a comprehensive, consistent multi-agency drug education programme for young people, their carers and educators in Westminster. Two voluntary organisations, Westminster Drug Project and the Hungerford Drug Project, have had posts funded to support drug education in local secondary schools. The needs of primary schools are now being considered, and education for parents is also planned.

Safer dancing: Westminster Drug Action Team is taking the lead on a London-wide poster campaign aimed at young people using drugs in dance settings. An information pack to be distributed in clubs is also planned, along with training for staff. Westminster City Council's licensing department were involved in developing Dance till dawn safely: a code of practice on health and safety at dance venues, recently launched by London Drug Policy Forum (0171 332 3084). This includes information on ventilation, availability of drinking water, and other measures to promote safer dancing.

Community safety: a Westminster Community Safety Drug Reference Group was launched in January 1997. The group includes local community and residents associations, the police and statutory agencies and will be focusing on reducing the impact of drug-related crime. The police and local drugs agencies are working to improve the referral of people arrested to appropriate drug and alcohol services. This includes people arrested for crimes to fund drug use, as well for drugs offences.

Training: a drug awareness training strategy is being developed, which will address the needs of local voluntary organisations as well as statutory agencies.

Shared care: Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority is working with GPs to help them to take on a greater role in the treatment and care of drug users, sharing this role with the specialist drugs agencies.

For further information, contact Siwan Lloyd Hayward, Coordinator, Westminster Drug Action Team, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority, 50 Eastbourne Terrace, London W2, tel. 0171 725 3406.

Drug Services in Westminster

Health Services

Specialist health services to drug users in Westminster are provided primarily by North West London Mental Health Trust (at St Mary's Hospital), except for people living in SW1 who are served by Riverside Mental Health Trust.

• **St Mary's Drug Dependency Centre** is an out-patient clinic for the assessment and treatment of problem drug use. The Centre offers a range of services including confidential advice and counselling, methadone maintenance, HIV and hepatitis testing, a life skills group and a well women's clinic. Drug Dependency Centre, St Mary's Hospital, South Wharf Road, London W2 1NY (next to Patterson Centre). Tel. 0171 725 6485/6/7.

• **The Caravan** offers a Needle Exchange, legal and welfare rights advice, and a range of complementary therapies, including shiatsu, acupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine, reflexology and aromatherapy. The Caravan, St Mary's Hospital, South Wharf Road, W2 1NY (next to QEQM building). Tel. 0171 725 1418.

• **Riverside Mental Health Trust Central Assessment Unit** carries out confidential assessments and medical check-ups, and then refers on to the range of treatments provided by the Substance Misuse Service, according to individual needs. The Unit works closely with psychologists, occupational therapists, social workers, Substance Misuse Service clinicians and HIV specialists. In addition to short-term counselling, the Unit provides health education focusing on HIV and safer drug use. The occupational therapist and social worker can also provide community care assessments, lifestyle management sessions and advice and information about housing and benefits. Riverside Mental Health Trust Central Assessment Unit, 69 Warwick Road, Earls Court, SW5. Tel. 0181 846 7777.

Social Services

• The **Substance Misuse Care Management Team** is responsible for assessing the social needs of people experiencing difficulties with drugs and/or alcohol, and assisting individuals, families and carers to clarify what support is needed. Individuals can refer themselves directly to the Team or, if they prefer, they can contact Westminster Drug Project or Hungerford Drug Project who can carry out the initial stages of the assessment on behalf of social services. Westminster City Council Social Services Substance Misuse Care Management Team, Roman House, 24 Greencoat Place, London SW1P. Tel. 0171 641 3139.

Voluntary sector

• **Westminster Drug Project**, 470 Harrow Road, W9 (0171 286 3339) is a community-based street agency in North Westminster which offers a free and confidential service to people with drug-related problems.

Services provided include drop-in facilities; needle exchange; counselling by appointment; acupuncture; referral for detoxification and rehabilitation; support with housing benefits, education etc; legal advice; project nurse; drug and sexual health advice.

Women Only Drop-in: a women's drop-in on Tuesdays provides a safe space for women who use or have used drugs to get together for mutual support. A crèche is available at this session for children (0-8 years). For details ring Anna or Sheila.

Black Drug Users' Support Group: this group, which meets every Tuesday evening 6-9pm, offers support to address people's wider social, economic, housing, welfare and legal needs, as well as any drug-related issues. Acupuncture and a meal are also available each week. For further details ring Marlene or Michael.

• **Turning Point Hungerford Drug Project**, 32a Wardour Street, London W1V 3HJ (0171 437 3523). The Hungerford Drug Project in Soho offers advice, information and counselling for people with drug related problems, their families and friends.

• **The Core Trust** is a centre which offers an holistic programme for release from addiction, which involves treating the whole person, not just the addictive symptoms, founded on its assertion that detoxification alone is not enough to prevent relapse. Core's aim is to support the person physically, emotionally and spiritually through a critical time of change. Clients are called students to signify the programme's strong focus on learning how to live free from addiction.

Core is open seven days a week and offers: detoxification/assessment period - using ear acupuncture; three month renewable treatment programme; three or six month aftercare programme.

Introductions to Core are run every Monday at 4pm, and no appointment is necessary. For further information con tact the Core Trust, 1-12 Lisson Cottages, 35a Lisson Grove, NW1. Tel. 0171 258 3031.

Management volunteers needed

A day centre with a unique approach to treating addiction holistically is evolving its status and wants to speak to people who are interested in becoming management committee members.

The Core Trust (address above) invites applications from people who are energetic, committed and excited by the prospect of volunteering their time and expertise in areas including: marketing, fundraising, PR, publicity, psychotherapy, management, health/addiction issues, training and voluntary organisations.

Dental Registration Campaign

Three out of four children living in Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster never go to a dentist unless they have a problem. When they do attend, it is usually because they are in pain and they have a problem. Children do not have to suffer this pain - it can be avoided by having regular check-ups with a dentist.

KCW Health Authority have launched a campaign to encourage parents to make sure their children register with a dentist and attend regular check ups. A free NHS dental information line has been set up to put people in touch with the 50 dental practices taking part in the campaign, which runs until the end of March 1997:

Dental Information Line: 0800 854 351

Included with this mail out is a copy of the "hippo" poster promoting the campaign. Please can you display this prominently. For further information about the Dental Registration Campaign, contact Helen Lipieta at KCW HA (0171 725 3291).

Health Authority five year strategy

Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority has just published a draft five year strategy for the period 1998-2003. The Health Authority is keen to encourage debate and discussion and wants to hear from as many people as possible. The strategy is short and sets out a framework for action over the next five years which reflects the Health Authority's growing knowledge of what local people say needs to change.

The Health Authority expects relative financial stability over the period and places a high priority on ensuring that there are high quality primary care and community services across KCW supported by good local mental health and acute hospital services. Should you wish to receive a copy of the strategy, please contact Lisa Strong (0171 725 3202) or write to her c/o the Chairman's officer KCW HA, 50 Eastbourne Terrace, London W2 6LX. The strategy itself gives details of the timetable for comments and how you may contribute to the debate. The work is being coordinated by Liz Collini who can be reached at the same address and phone number and who will be happy to answer your queries.

What do you think of the Health Service?

The Community Health Council (CHC) holds regular meetings with the Health Authority to discuss the quality of local health services. As part of this, the CHC will be looking at complaints, comments and suggestions about health services that the local public has brought to them. Local groups with opinions about local health services (including GPs) they wish the CHC to raise on their behalf at these meetings should inform Janine Woods at Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster CHC, 45-47 Praed Street, London W2 1NR. tel. 0171 706 7100. The CHC will keep groups informed of any developments arising from these meetings.

User consultation news

Conference for People with Learning Difficulties: The Learning Disabilities Joint Planning Team is supporting a user-only conference for people with learning difficulties on February 13 at the Isaac Newton Development Centre. The day will be spent talking about the services that are currently available (and what is *not* available); care managers and how the service might be improved; and assessment - who decides what is needed, and how. For further information, contact Catherine Flynn at VAW (0171 724 1143), or Tom Mckevitt at Social Services (0171 641 3963).

Name-calling? Ballot of disabled people: Disabled people at Portland House day service are casting their votes in an exercise to describe - or perhaps to redefine - their relationship with the services they receive. Currently located in a portacabin in Victoria, the service is to transfer to a brand new building later in 1997. Many see the move to a new venue as providing an ideal opportunity to take a fresh look at themselves and the kind of service they expect, and are holding a ballot to decide how they will be addressed. Suggestions have ranged from the ambitious 'partner', through 'member', 'user', 'client' and, at the cynical extreme, even 'inmate'. What's in a name? Well, the exercise has certainly generated debate and discussion, and the votes have not even been counted yet.

User Consultation Report: A report on consultation in Westminster over the last 18 months is available from the User Involvement Project at VAW. Contact Catherine Flynn on 0171 724 1143.

Community Care Public Consultation

Over 100 people packed City Hall on 28th November 1996 to raise their concerns about health and social services locally with senior officers and members from both WCC Social Services and KCW Health Authority. Among the issues raised were:

- the community care charging policy: there will be a review of the policy in summer 1997, one year after the policy was introduced.
- support for people with mental health problems in the community: there is rising demand for mental health services, which services are struggling to keep up with despite increases in funding (KCW Health Authority spends 25% of its budget on mental health, compared with an average 13% nationally).
- access to medical records: it was acknowledged that people can have difficulties accessing records from before 1991, when new legislation came into force.

A summary of the issues raised at the meeting is available from Angeline Walker, Westminster City Council Social Services Planning and Review Unit, tel. 0171 641 1910. The consultation will help inform the new Community Care Plan, which will be published at the end of March 1997.

Children's Services Plan

Westminster City Council and KCW Health Authority held a consultation meeting for the voluntary sector on the new Children's Services Plan on January 23rd (Voluntary Action Westminster hosted a pre-meeting a week previously). The Plan will set out how social services and other local agencies intend to support children in need over the next three years. The meeting featured a useful discussion between local voluntary organisations and a panel that included John Dennington, Assistant Director (Children and Families), Westminster Social Services, Siobhan Clarke, KCW Health Authority, and Gale Waller, Westminster Education Department. One outcome was a mutual commitment to ongoing dialogue between statutory and voluntary sectors, with further meetings planned.

Written comments on the Plan should be submitted by 6 February 1997 to Liz Hill, Planning and Review, Social Services Department, City Hall, Victoria Street, SW1E 6QP (0171 641 2464).

Advice Workers' Forum

The December meeting of the Advice Workers' Forum featured a presentation from Andrew Connell, the new Benefits Advice and Support Officer at Homeless Network (0171 799 2404). He is coordinating a London Single Homeless Advice Forum for workers providing welfare rights advice to homeless people. Lynne Gillett discussed the Volunteer Advice Project at the Migrants Resource Centre (0171 834 6650). 20 volunteers from migrant communities are being trained in all aspects of advice work. If you would like to be sent Advice Workers' Forum papers, contact Madlin Hewitt (0171 724 1143).

Mental Health Advocacy Project Expands

Welcome to Mona Lesforis, who joins Jonathan Coe as Mental Health Advocacy Project Worker. Mona and Jonathan can be contacted on 0171 724 5802.

Developing Advocacy in Westminster

Advocacy is helping people say what they want, obtain their rights, represent their interests and gain the services they need. Already within Westminster, dedicated advocacy services exist for users of mental health services, people with learning difficulties and for older people. A peer advocacy project is run by the UK Coalition of People Living with HIV and AIDS. Many other local groups and organisations would also describe much of what they do as advocacy. Models of advocacy vary widely, as do sources and levels of funding, while gaps in provision exist elsewhere - there is no advocacy service for disabled people or for people whose first language is not English, for example.

KCW Health Authority is launching a research project that will provide a comprehensive picture of what advocacy is provided, by whom, and how this is supported. It will also seek to clarify the role of the Health Authority and other agencies in bridging gaps in provision. The launch will be held on Friday 21 February, from 10.30-12.00 noon at KCW Health Authority, 50 Eastbourne Terrace, London W2, and organisations with an interest in advocacy work are invited to attend. See enclosed flyer for booking form, or for further details contact Mike Silvera, 0171 725 3304.

Westminster Health and Social Care is published monthly by Voluntary Action Westminster, 37 Chapel Street, London NW1 (0171 724 1143). It is edited by Neil Orr (Health and Social Care Worker) and Catherine Flynn (User Involvement Project Worker) with support from Madlin Hewitt (Adminstrator). February 1997.

Westminster Health and Social Care

"Access to safe, reliable and comfortable transport at an affordable cost is central to an individual's ability to maintain and/or establish independence, to make genuine choices about services and activities and to make as full use as possible of employment opportunities, educational, social and recreational facilities and health provision" (Ruth Hayes, Camden Community Transport, Westminster Transport Research Project Report, 1996).

Camden Community Transport has completed a major research project on community transport in Westminster, with funding from joint finance. The study aimed to review transport provision for disabled people and others who find it difficult to use conventional public transport, to analyse transport needs, and to make recommendations for the future organisation of transport services.

Despite the dense concentration of public transport services in Westminster, they can be even less accessible to older and disabled people than elsewhere in London because of the very high numbers of people using these services. Just to get on to a bus or a tube train, at, for instance, Victoria, can be a major battle. For those with cars, there are particular parking difficulties in central London.

Users greatly appreciate the Taxicard scheme (which offers subsidised taxi fares) and Dial-a-Ride, as these do allow people to choose where and when they want to travel. However the costs of using these services, and difficulties booking transport, limit the number of journeys many people can make.

A central paradox identified by the report is that in Westminster the significant level of unmet need for transport coexists with a large number of vehicles used to provide transport to community care service users. The report found "a sense of frustration... that existing statutory resources were generally tied to specific centres and facilities" while "There was no flexible network to meet individual requirements or to take people to facilities which did not provide transport". For instance social services vehicles are primarily used to transport people to day centres, and can only be used for other journeys at limited times.

The major conclusion of the report is that there is a need for a more strategic approach to community transport in Westminster. Better coordination of the large number of vehicles in the statutory and voluntary sectors would enable a shift from service-led provision to a flexible system able to respond to the diverse needs of users.

The report outlines several possible new models of transport operation, including:

- the creation of a Control Centre to deal with all transport requests (ownership of vehicles would remain as it as present);
- a Pilot Vehicle Integration Project: similar to the above, but focused on a local area with some dedicated vehicles.

In Westminster, unlike in many other areas, there is no voluntary sector based Community Transport operation crossing different care groups. The report recommends that "Funding should be identified for development work to be undertaken in the voluntary sector". One focus could be on developing a vehicle brokerage scheme within the voluntary sector to formalise the sharing of vehicles and promote good practice through driver training and safety checks, etc.

As yet, no resources have been identified to implement the recommendations of the report. Clearly setting up new systems would have cost implications, but on the other hand there is scope for a more efficient use of vehicles and better value for money. At present in core hours, there may be many vehicles driving around Westminster at any one time, in some cases duplicating journeys, while at other times of day vehicles are under-utilized.

A multiagency group has been meeting to consider the report, coordinated by Glynnis Joffe, Westminster Social Services (tel. 0171 380 9066).

Camden Community Transport (0171 911 0959) are happy to advise Westminster voluntary organisations. Voluntary organisations interested in discussing how new transport projects might be developed should contact Neil Orr at VAW (0171 724 1143).

Community transport in Westminster

Transport Services in Westminster

Central London Dial-a-Ride (Westminster Division)

Dial-a-Ride provides accessible transport to people who have substantial difficulty using mainstream public transport. Users have to register, and trips have to be booked in advance. The fares structure corresponds to that of London Transport, but concessionary passes cannot be used. The service is not available for journeys where the health service has responsibility to provide transport, e.g. hospital appointments. For details, call 0171 266 6104.

Taxi Card Scheme

This scheme allows residents of the City of Westminster with disabilities which prevent them from using buses or trains to travel in London's licensed radio-taxis (black cabs) at greatly reduced fares. The scheme is funded by the City Council and administered by the Social Services Department. 1,000 taxis are contracted to work in the Westminster scheme. Application forms and information from City Hall, tel. 0171 641 2298/ 2266/ 2254.

Social Services Transport

Westminster Social Services can provide transport to day centres and other facilities for people assessed as needing it by care managers. Outside of core hours, vehicles are sometimes used to provide transport to voluntary sector services.

Transport to day services is organised by the Social Services Transport Section (0171 641 2298) for older people, and by the relevant business units for people with learning difficulties and people with disabilities.

For children with special needs transport can be arranged, for those assessed as needing it, from home to day nurseries and schools (Special Needs Transport, City Hall, 0171 641 3392).

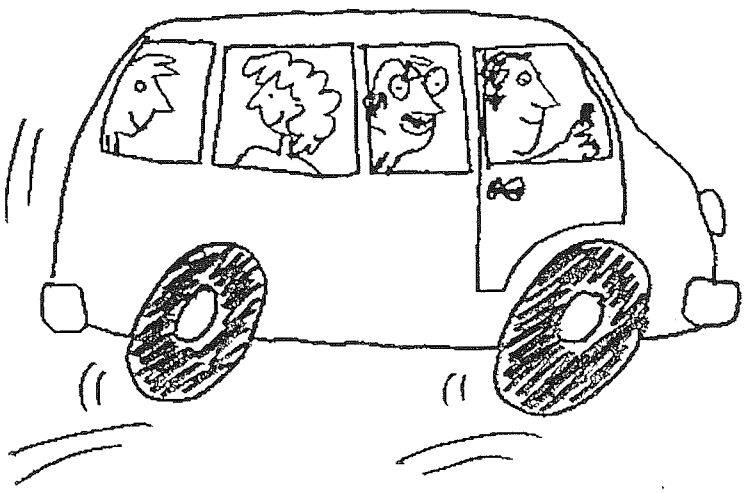
Ride and Read

Westminster library service are providing a new service for people who want to visit the library but are unable to do so on their own without help. The pilot scheme offers visits to Victoria library every three weeks. Contact Julie Ryder or Sue Cornish at the Home Library Service (0171 641 4893).

Hospital transport

If a patient is unable to travel to a hospital or clinic because of illness or disability, transport should be provided by the health service. In emergencies only, a 999 ambulance can be called. For non-emergencies, such as outpatients appointments, transport should be arranged with the NHS Trust by the referring GP (ask if it is not offered). The NHS Trust is responsible for arranging transport home when people are discharged from hospital.

The Trusts provide transport as part of their contract with KCW Health Authority. If voluntary organisations wish to raise general issues about hospital transport, they could contact Simon Williams, Commissioning Manager, KCW HA, 0171 725 3309.



Public transport

The Concessionary Fares scheme provides permits for free travel on London public transport to older people and registered disabled people. In Westminster, passes are issued by the Transport Section of Social Services (0171 641 2298).

The London Transport Unit for Disabled Passengers provides information on accessible services (tel. 0171 918 3312, 0171 918 3015 - minicom).

Parking permits

In addition to the national Orange Badge scheme, Westminster operates a separate White Badge for people with disabilities who live or work in Westminster, with additional parking entitlements, including free parking on meters. To apply for both the White Badge and the Orange Badge (needed by Westminster drivers to park outside of the City), contact Parkwise, Westminster City Council's Parking Services Contractor, 0171 641 1785.

Residents Access Group

Transport issues for disabled people in Westminster are regularly considered by Disability Action Westminster's Residents Access Group, which raises outstanding issues with council officers at the quarterly Access Committee. If you have any issue you want raised, contact Len Kottnitz, Access Officer, 0171 266 2143.

• *some local voluntary organisations have their own vehicles which they make available to other projects when not in use. If you would like to publicise your vehicle's availability in Current, contact VAW.*

Transport Publications

• Help the Aged's new report, *Licensed to Drive at 85*, argues that community care policies have so far overlooked the vital part that transport provision has to play. Mervyn Kohler, Head of Public Affairs, points to the growing number of older people living independently in their own homes, and notes that at the same time, public transport is withering. 'How are we going to make sure there is an appropriate raft of services to support them?', he asks. The report costs £10 and is available from Christine Collis, tel. 0171 253 0253.

• *Minibus Safety - A Code of Practice* is the title of a new publication from the Community Transport Association and RoSPA. The book includes chapters on managing a minibus service, driver awareness, passenger care and minibus maintenance. Voluntary sector transport providers can obtain a copy (priced at £5.88 incl p&p) from CTA Manchester by calling 0161 366 6685.

• The Community Transport Association also publishes *Community Transport*, a bimonthly journal for minibus and non-profit transport operators. The CTA provides training and free information on accessible, voluntary and community transport. It is funded by the Department of Transport with support from Help the Aged. For information, call 0171 284 4600.

• Milton Keynes Borough Council has produced what it believes to be the first country-wide guide to public transport for mobility impaired people. The eight page booklet, *All Aboard*, is available from Dawn Dewar, Community Transport Officer. Tel. 01908 682765.

• GLAD (Greater London Association of Disabled People) recently published *All change 2000*, a comprehensive report into transport in London; it concludes that despite some improvements, disabled people are still discriminated against by transport providers. The main report (348 pages) costs £25.00, a 16 page summary cost £2.00. Details from GLAD 0171 346 5800.

Transport user views

People with learning difficulties levelled some weighty criticisms at transport provision in Westminster at a recent conference. Concerns raised on the day included the shortage of wheelchair accessible transport and lower floor buses. One person drew attention to his dubious good fortune of living close to a mobility bus route: 'There's a mobility bus that comes around my way, but it only comes once a week. They should come the same as other buses'. Some were annoyed at the consistently late arrival of cabs booked through the Taxicard system, while others were ignorant of how to access this service. One person commented, 'I know there's something called a taxicard, but I don't know how to apply for one'. There was universal agreement that not being able to use bus passes before 9am was unsatisfactory, either limiting opportunities or exhausting limited cash supplies. The message was clear: 'We want to use our bus passes before 9am'.

Advice Workers' Forum

The January meeting of the Advice Workers' Forum featured a presentation from Duncan Lane, London Advice Services Alliance, on benefit changes for asylum seekers. LASA have established a new advice line for the voluntary sector on refugees and benefits (0171 247 0054). They are also producing a regular Refugees and Benefits Briefing (available free, call 0171 377 9981). If you would like to be sent Advice Workers' Forum papers, contact Madlin Hewitt (0171 724 1143).

Voluntary Action Westminster and
Notting Hill & Chelsea Social Councils

Sexual health and the black communities: current issues and future challenges in Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster

A workshop for voluntary organisations, with presentations on current work by Vivienne Coote (Blackliners), Sarah Kakayi (Migrant and Refugee Communities Forum), Eddie Aroda (Uganda Youth Support Group) and Sophie Kafeero (London Lighthouse).

Tuesday March 18th, 2.00-4.30 pm,
in the Meeting Room, 1 Thorpe Close, W10
(nearest tube Ladbroke Grove)

To book a place contact Christine Vigars, Notting Hill Social Council, 0181 969 9897, or Neil Orr, VAW , 0171 724 1143.

Conference for People with Learning Difficulties

A user-only event has given planners food for thought. Thirty people with learning difficulties came up with some hard-hitting comments when they got together for a day on 13 February to talk about services and what they want from them. Main points from the event, sponsored by the Joint Planning Team as part of its consultation process, were presented to professionals and carers at a wider 'stakeholder conference' on February 27, and are listed below.

On current services:

- The biggest problem about services is when staff don't respect us;
- Some of them are rude, and think about themselves first. This is wrong;
- People's job is to help us. If they can't be bothered they shouldn't be there;
- Lots of people are unhappy with transport services. If taxis don't arrive on time or if people don't have a taxi-card, they can't do what they want;
- Lots of people want to go to different colleges or day centres.

On care management and assessment:

- Some care managers are very good, but some are unreliable;
- Sometimes care managers cancel meetings and don't say why;
- People will always need care managers in an emergency but they should help us to plan for the future - some people's parents will die and they want to know where they will live;
- We don't think it's right that some people don't have a care manager. There should be more care managers
- Assessment is not explained properly to us;
- There can be too many people involved in assessments.

Recommendations:

- We want more choice of housing. We want to be involved in planning where we live;
- We want more staff who are good workers. We should be involved in choosing staff;
- We want more choice of day services instead of being in one big building;
- We want more care managers;
- We want more information that is easier to understand;
- We don't want to be kept in the dark.

New Community Care Coordinator

Jubin Mama has just started in the post of Community Care Coordinator at KCW Health Authority, replacing Sara Hodge. Here he introduces himself.

My post is funded jointly by Westminster City Council and KCW HA. The principal aim is to co-ordinate joint planning and the implementation of community care policies and criteria between health and social services in Westminster.

My previous experience includes information and development work in HIV/AIDS, and in services for drug users, with most of my working life having been within the voluntary sector.

I am keen to promote the development of good working relationships between the statutory and voluntary sectors, and to help enhance the ability of voluntary organisations to provide community services of a high quality.

I am responsible for the coordination of the Joint Finance application process and monitoring. I will shortly be contacting voluntary sector projects currently funded by Joint Finance to introduce myself. I also look forward to working with VAW to enable more voluntary organisations to submit bids for Joint Finance.

If you would like to contact me, do not hesitate to call on my direct line, 0171 725 3318.

Joint Finance 1997/98

Westminster Joint Consultative Committee has decided which joint finance proposals to recommend funding for 1997/98. Voluntary organisations who have been successful include:

- Dutch Pot Lunch and Social Club: accident prevention project with older people;
- Paddington Integration Project: community facilitator to support people with learning difficulties in Victoria;
- Bayswater Families Centre: advice and support worker for single asylum seekers and refugees;
- Westminster Deaf User Group: development project;
- Rugby House Project: community alcohol service;
- Westminster Race Equality Council: health and social care project.

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Westminster Health and Social Care

Child Protection and the Voluntary Sector

Many voluntary organisations in Westminster work directly with children, while most others work with adults who may have children. From time to time workers and volunteers may have concerns about the welfare of children they are directly or indirectly in contact with. In some cases it may be appropriate to make a referral to social services.

Social services have a duty to investigate where a child is believed to be "suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm" (Children Act 1989). This could include instances of physical or emotional abuse, child sexual abuse or neglect. If you believe that a child is in this category, you can discuss your concerns anonymously with social services who will be able to advise on whether to refer or not .

Making a referral: If you do decide to refer the case, you can contact the duty social worker at your local area office. If you feel unhappy about talking directly to social services you could call the NSPCC (0181 960 8488) or the local Police Child Protection Team (0171 321 9736/7).

It is good practice for agencies to discuss their concerns with parents before taking any action, unless there are suspicions of sexual abuse in which case you should speak to social services first. Parents will usually be informed who made the referral, although how this is done is negotiated with the agency.

What happens next: If Social Services agree that there is a real concern they will hold a Child Protection Investigation. This involves talking to parents, children (if old enough), professionals involved with the family such as doctors and teachers, and where appropriate, the referring voluntary organisation.

Sometimes the investigation finds that no abuse has occurred. In most other cases, parents and social services are able to agree on how to protect children from abuse. This may involve identifying additional sources of support for the family.

It is only if the abuse is severe, or the parents and social services are unable to agree, that the case is taken to the next stage - a Child Protection Conference with all the relevant agencies represented. In Westminster, only a quarter of Child Protection cases get this far.

The Conference can decide to place a child on the Child Protection Register, a confidential list of children at risk of abuse or neglect. At the end of 1996, there were 111 on the Westminster register. For each child on the register, there is an individual Child Protection Plan with a key worker appointed to help parents make it a success.

The emphasis throughout is on working with parents to make the child safe. Very few children are separated from their parents as a result of an Investigation, and even in the 5% of cases where the law is used in this way, separation is usually only temporary.

Further information: Last year, Westminster Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) launched new information booklets for parents: *Child Protection Investigations* and *Child protection Conferences and Plans*. These are available in the following languages: English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Urdu, Bengali, and Chinese. They are also being transposed onto cassette in all these languages, and produced in Braille (ask your local area office for copies).

Training: Voluntary sector workers can attend social services training courses including *Recognition of Children in Need of Protection* and *Child Sexual Abuse Issues*. For details see the Social Services Training and Commissioning Unit Training Programme (call 0171 798 2478 for a copy).

Policy development: Many voluntary organisations working with children will already have policies in place for how to handle concerns about child abuse. The ACPC can advise on developing policies.

Trevor Moores is the Child Protection Coordinator, Westminster City Council. He is the secretary of Westminster ACPC, which coordinates local policies and practices, training and information. He would be pleased to answer any queries along with his colleagues Yvette Billingham and Sally Trench (child protection specialists). Call 0171 641 3927.

From 1 April 1997, children and families social services will be provided from the following offices:

- North of Oxford St/Bayswater Rd:
  4 Frampton Street NW8 (0171 641 1623) or
  155 Westbourne Terrace, W2 (0171 641 1455)

- South of Oxford Street:
  Roman House, Greencoat Place SW1
  (0171 641 3895)

The offices at 313 Harrow Road, and Berwick Street, Soho are now closed to the public.

Family support in Westminster

Family support services can help parents to care for their children, help meet the practical needs of families, and provide opportunities to meet other parents and to develop new skills.

They can also play an important preventative role. In the national debate about the future of child protection, there has been an increasing emphasis on family support as a means of preventing problems arising in families. The following are some of the voluntary sector family support services available locally.

Bayswater Families Centre, 14-18 Newton Road W2 (0171 229 8976)
The Bayswater Families Centre is run by NCH Action for Children, and works mainly with families living in hotel accommodation locally. It offers a drop-in for parents with their children, crèche, cooking and laundry facilities (often absent in hotel accommodation) and supervised play for children under five. Adult education sessions and other organised activities are provided. The Centre has a Social Worker who works individually with families and a Family Support Worker who provides a community outreach service to the hotels.

Cardinal Hume Family Centre, 3-7 Arneway Street, Horseferry Road SW1 (0171 222 9030)
Cardinal Hume Family Centre supports parents with young children, most of them living in temporary accommodation in Victoria/South Westminster. Services include emotional support, advice on benefits and housing, laundry facilities, low cost lunches and a playroom.

Soho Family Centre, St James Residence, 23 Brewer Street W1 (0171 439 1578).
The Centre offers a range of child care, health, education and support services for local families with young children. These include day care through a linked childminding scheme, playgroups, parents and toddler groups, adult education classes in ESOL and sewing (with crèche), a Bengali womens' group, a Chinese womens' group, advice sessions, health promotion with adults and children, parent discussion groups, outreach with families and educational outings for children and families. Staff include both Bengali and Chinese community workers.

South Westminster Befriend a Family, 134 Buckingham Palace Road SW1 (0171 259 9119).
Befriend a Family is a befriending scheme for families under stress. It provides support to families living with at least one child under 8 years old living in Social Services south district. The families are typically experiencing isolation and poverty. They are introduced to a home-visiting befriending volunteer for up to a year or attend a parents support group for 12 weeks during the school term. Trained volunteer befrienders and parents group staff work within child protection guidelines.

FamilyLine 0171 923 9200
FamilyLine is a new London-wide confidential telephone helpline operated by the Family Welfare Association. It offers a response across the generations - from child care concerns to problems of older family members. Support can be offered on a range of practical and emotional issues, and information about other services and how to contact them. The service is available Wednesday to Friday, 3 - 8 pm and Saturdays and Sundays 12 -6 pm. Urdu, Punjabi, Turkish and Kurdish speakers are available at certain times. For further information call Vanessa Wiseman, FamilyLine Co-ordinator, 0171 254 6251.

St Paul's NEWPIN, St Pauls' Centre, Rossmore Road NW1 (0171 724 6765)
NEWPIN is a support network for parents of young children. It helps parents with problems such as depression, isolation, emotional insecurity or difficulties raising children. It provides peer support through a parents support group and there is a drop-in for parents and young children, with a play room run by a trained Family Play Facilitator.

Queens Park Family Service Unit, 604 Harrow Road W10 (0181 960 3266)
Queens Park FSU is part of the National Family Service Units, a network of locally based projects. It provides social work and community-based support to families in W9 (and some parts of W10). Family support services include a drop-in, toy library, holiday play scheme, children's group, family social work, parenting skills work and a group for women and their children under the age of five whose first language is not English. The FSU recently launched a report of a joint research project with Westminster Social Services into the family support needs of families living on the Mozart Estate.

For detailed information on local children's services, see **Under 8s Welcome in and around Westminster**, a comprehensive guide to health, education, play and social services in the City. This is published by Westminster Social Services and is available free from libraries and One Stop Shops.

Publications

• **Your link to a doctor**: KCW HA have published a leaflet explaining about GPs, including how to choose a doctor, and what services they provide. The leaflet is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Bengali, Arabic and Somali. Call the Health Promotion Resource Centre (0171 725 3456), quoting L63.001.

• **At your service...an A-Z guide to Westminster City Council Services**. The new 1997/98 edition of this guide has just been published. Braille, large print and audio tape versions are available. Copies are available from One Stop Services and libraries, or call Neal Zetter, Communications Manager, 0171 641 2809

• **North West London Mental Health NHS Trust** has published a new edition of its directory of services. NWL is responsible for the provision of mental health services for all of Westminster, except the Victoria area (SW1). To obtain a copy, call Charlotte Stephens on 0181 830 0033, ext.2205.

• **Asylum is everyone's right: a practical guide for Asylum Seekers** is a new booklet jointly published by the Migrants Resource Centre and the Latin American Women's Rights Service. The guide is aimed at asylum sekers and includes information on benefits, housing, health, education and sources of advice and practical help. The guide is free for asylum seekers, and is available in English and Spanish. Details call MRC (0171 834 6650) or LAWRS (0171 831 4145).

World Mental Health Day Small Grants Scheme

World Mental Health Day takes place on October 10th. Grants of £100 - £500 are available from the Health Education Authority to fund activities around the day. For details call the World Mental Health Day Campaign line on 0171 413 1991 (closing date 23 May 1997), or Sheron Pusey at KCW Health Promotion (0171 725 3414).

Research and development project on primary care led purchasing of mental health services in KCW

Work started in September 1996 on a project collaborating with primary health care teams to determine the needs of patients with mental health problems, find appropriate interventions, and of these, consider what might be provided within primary care, and what should be commissioned from specialist secondary providers.

The 21 month project is led by Geoff Shepherd at KCW Health Authority, with researcher, Barbara Cunningham and consultants from the Kings Fund. They are working with 8 GP practices who have elected to undertake in-depth work as part of the project. These practices cover nearly 50,000 people, and are based in Paddington, Victoria and Chelsea.

The initial approach of the project is to combine analysis of patient data, interviews with GPs and practice staff, and user focus groups, to encourage information to improve the commissioning of local mental health services.

For further details contact Geoff Shepherd on 0171 725 3286 or Barbara Cunningham on 0171 725 3407.

Voluntary Action Westminster Health and Social Care Project Briefing meetings:

Review of community support services for children with disabilities

Friday 9 May 1997, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm at VAW

Philippa Russell (Council for Disabled Children) has been commissioned to undertake a review of services across Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster. Philippa will be attending this meeting, providing an opportunity for Westminster voluntary organisations to hear more about the review, and to put across their views.

Joint Planning in Westminster

Did you apply for Joint Finance last year?
Do you hope to apply this year?
Do you want to know more about joint planning?
Are your views listened to?

Tuesday 13 May 1997, 10:00 am -12:30 pm at VAW

This meeting with senior officers from health and social services will discuss joint finance, consultation and other aspects of joint planning, including how voluntary organisations might wish to see it improved in the future.

To book a place at either of the above meetings, call Madlin Hewitt, 0171 724 1143.

New Disability Policy for Westminster

Disability groups, voluntary organisations and individuals have been putting forward their views for inclusion in Westminster City Council's corporate policy on disability, to be launched in June. Despite the tight timing, with consultation crammed into two weeks in March, groups such as WEDGE (a disabled women's organisation) have made comprehensive submissions. WEDGE's recommendations include:

- ***Home helps:*** clear explanation needed of which jobs home helps are allowed to do and which jobs they are not allowed to do; clarity regarding how much time is allocated;
- ***Odd jobs:*** Council to supply list of recommended, trustworthy odd-job men/women who charge fairly;
- ***Home delivery of groceries:*** Council to encourage shops to offer this facility;
- ***Hospital discharge:*** more efficient co-ordination around visits between district nurses, home helps and meals on wheels;
- ***Supporting carers:*** housing relatives nearby to help disabled people - and save public money;
- ***Adaptations to the home:*** waiting time should be greatly shortened;
- ***New bus routes:*** the Council should urge that these are fully wheelchair accessible;
- ***Parking permits:*** a badge for all disabled people for use by visitors to their home, including home helps, friends, workmen;
- ***Disabled employees:*** employ more disabled people in Council offices, especially those which work with disabled people;
- ***Supporting networking:*** use of Disability Register to enable disabled people to contact one another and overcome isolation;
- ***Complaints:*** publicise the right of disabled people to complain about services; make more widely available accessible information on complaints procedures;
- ***Advocacy service:*** fill the gap - advocacy services exist for the elderly and the mentally disabled;
- ***Information:*** produce a smaller, more 'handleable' version of the *Possibilities* directory of services;
- ***Supporting groups:*** the Council should be more active in helping voluntary disabled people's organisations and set up accessible procedure by which groups can request help;
- ***Monitoring services:*** feedback from service users to form part of all monitoring - to help improve services and make them more accountable.

WEDGE is seeking new disabled women members. Enquiries to Pat El-Shwarby 0181 969 3082.

Sexual health and the black communities in Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster

Voluntary Action Westminster and Notting Hill & Chelsea Social Councils held a joint workshop in March featuring presentations from a number of sexual health projects working with a focus on black and minority ethnic communities in KCW.

Belinda Calaguas (Migrant and Refugees Communities Forum, Kensington & Chelsea, 0181 964 4815) gave a presentation on the "Health promotion through women's mobilisation with the Ugandan community in KCW" project. Ugandan women were recruited and trained to act as health advocates, working with their friends, relatives and neighbours to raise awareness of health issues (particularly HIV), and to improve access to services. Trained advocates then in turn recruited new women volunteers. Funding for the project has now finished, but it is hoped to identify support to enable the network of women to continue to function.

Vivienne Coote talked about Blackliners (0171 738 7468), an HIV voluntary organisation for Black people of African, Asian and Caribbean descent. Blackliners is based in south London, but is funded to provide services across London including in Westminster. Services include domiciliary care for people with HIV, counselling, advocacy, helplines, housing and a hardship fund.

Eddie Aroda discussed the work of the Uganda Youth Support Group (0171 328 1781). UYSG was formed in 1992 to help young Ugandan refugees in London, and is now the only Ugandan organisation providing services in KCW, with a focus on HIV and sexual health. Services provided by volunteers include advice, counselling, advocacy (e.g. accompanying people to hospital) and condom distribution. UYSG has tried to counter the fear of hospitals in the Ugandan community by, for instance, doing education on HIV treatments and the importance of treatment compliance. Another issue has been sex education.

Joan Chakaodza is the Community Volunteer Organiser at London Lighthouse (0171 792 1200). She works with the HIV home support service, which Lighthouse now provides under contract for Westminster and other London boroughs. Lighthouse has tried to address perceptions that it is primarily a service for gay men. It has a support group for women and every Friday the day care service is for women only with food, child care, complementary therapies etc. It now has more African women using the service, although not many men.

A full report of the workshop is available from Neil Orr at Voluntary Action Westminster.

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Westminster Health and Social Care

Continuing care is for people who require health care on a long term basis, sometimes indefinitely, due to particular illnesses, conditions or disabilities. It usually refers to NHS inpatient care for people who are no longer able to live in their own homes, and who require significant nursing and clinical support. The greatest numbers of people requiring continuing care are older people, including many with mental health problems.

Against a background of rising numbers of older people, the number of NHS hospital long-term places for older people fell from 75,000 in 1970 to 54,800 in 1994. Some health authorities no longer had any continuing care provision.

However, in 1994 the Health Service Ombudsman ruled that the National Health Service had a duty to provide long term nursing care in a specific case in Leeds. In February 1995, the Government responded by issuing guidance to health authorities which clearly stated that they did have a responsibility for continuing care.

The guidance required health authorities to agree local criteria to determine which individuals would have their care provided or paid for by the NHS. Significantly it did not make health authorities responsible for all nursing care of older people.

Paying for nursing care

Most people expect the NHS to provide them with life-long care, free at the point of delivery. This is not the case for older people needing long term care, with only a limited proportion meeting the eligibility criteria for NHS continuing care. Many others will have to pay towards their own care, either in private nursing homes or in means-tested provision partly funded by social services.

In its election manifesto, Age Concern England argued for free nursing care for all and that "People who live in [non-NHS] nursing homes are being penalised because they are paying for nursing care that is provided free to everyone else".

The situation in Westminster

Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority and the two local authorities have agreed policies and eligibility criteria for NHS continuing care, which came into effect from April 1996. As well as older people these cover adults with physical disabilities, and with learning disabilities, and children.

An older person whose physical frailty may make it unsafe or unsuitable for them to remain at home receives an assessment to determine whether they meet the eligibility criteria for NHS continuing care. The assessment uses a tool known as the Barthel ADL (Activities of Daily Living) Index. This looks at how much support an individual requires for a range of daily functions such as feeding, dressing, bathing and toilet use. There are different criteria for the elderly mentally infirm.

Although it is only the more physically frail and/or mentally ill older people who meet the criteria in KCW HA, they are less restrictive than in many other health authorities.

KCW HA review

KCW HA are currently reviewing the future provision of NHS continuing care for older people. Recommendations will be made to the Health Authority in July.

A particular problem has been identified in the north of KCW, where there are fewer NHS continuing care facilities for older people than in the south. Options being explored include a shift from hospital ward based care to allow more people to have their own rooms, and developing the provision of NHS continuing care in the community.

The role of the voluntary sector

Voluntary Action Westminster have submitted a report to the KCW review, based on a workshop with local voluntary organisations. Our conclusions include:

- Voluntary organisations can provide an important independent perspective on NHS Nursing Homes and other continuing care facilities, including advocacy and support for users and carers.

- Voluntary sector services such as day care and respite could be part of NHS continuing care packages in the community.

- With health support some older people eligible for continuing care could remain in sheltered housing schemes and voluntary sector provided registered homes.

- Mainstream voluntary sector services for older people such as lunch and social clubs play a preventative role by promoting social functioning, physical activity and health awareness.

- *KCW HA have produced a range of leaflets on continuing care. These are available from Jubin Mama at KCW HA (725 3318), as are the eligibility criteria for continuing care.*

- *The report 'Continuing care for older people: the role of the voluntary sector in KCW' is available from Neil Orr at VAW (0171 724 1143).*

NHS Continuing Care for Older People

Older people's services in Westminster: new developments

Older people in Westminster

• There are currently around 25,500 people aged over 65 living in Westminster, including 8,850 aged 75-84 and 3,350 aged over 85.

• It is estimated that amongst older people aged over 75 , there are over 3000 with moderate to severe disabilities and around 1700 suffering from dementia.

source: Community Care Plan, 1997-2000.

Westminster Pensioners Association

Westminster Pensioners Association are opening a new Pimlico office on June 24th. Benefits advice will be available on Tuesdays from 10-1, and the office will also be open to the public on Wednesdays (12-3). The office is at 99 Tachbrook Street, SW1 (0171 630 5530).

The Pimlico office is in addition to the existing one at 284 Harrow Road, W2 (0171 289 1849). WPA services include befriending, gardening, odd jobs, drop-in mornings, advice and day trips.

GP services for older people

Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Community Health Council have launched a new report on 'GP services for older people in KCW'. The report has been produced by the Primary Health Care Group at the CHC, and is based on interviews with GPs and older people across the district. For further information contact Dan Jakob at the CHC on 0171 706 7100.

Westminster Information Project

Westminster Libraries have been chosen to be the host organisation for the new Westminster Information Project for Older People and People with Disabilities. The aim is to develop a comprehensive database of services for older people and disabled people. The Project is being managed by Julie Ryder at Westminster libraries - (0171 641 4893).

Westminster Advocacy Service for Senior Residents

Westminster Advocacy Service for Senior Residents have appointed a new coordinator to replace Rupert Williams, who has left to take up a new post. Irene Kohler will be starting on June 16th.

WASSR have received lottery funding for an advocacy project focusing on older people with dementia. The project plans to recruit and train volunteer advocates to support older people with dementia in residential settings and those isolated in the community. For further information, contact Rebecca Planton, the dementia project worker.

• Westminster Advocacy Service for Senior Residents, 55 Dean Street, W1V 5HJ (tel. 0171 439 3131).

Carers Network Westminster

Carers Network Westminster (CNW) are marking National Carers Week (9-15 June) with the launch of a new 'Guide to breaks for carers of older people'. The guide provides a directory of respite, relief and other breaks for Westminster carers. The launch will take place at CNW's carers day at Whiteley's Shopping Centre on 12 June.

CNW have appointed Mabel Phua as their new Carers Support Worker for Carers of Older People (0171 932 0045), replacing Di Robertson.

CNW now facilitate four neighbourhood meetings for carers, in W9, SW1, W2 and NW8. The groups are open to carers from all different situations, not just carers of older people. For further details ring Sara Hepburn (0171 932 0026).

• Carers Network Westminster, 24 Churton Street, SW1V 2LP

Joint Planning Team for Older People

The JPT is responsible for consultation about services for older people in Westminster, and helps to plan the future development of services. It consists of representatives from health, social services and housing. The older people's JPT is currently considering what the future priorities for older people's services should be. If there are any issues you would like to raise, please contact Karen Greenwood, Chair, Older People's JPT, KCW Health Authority, 50 Eastbourne Terrace, London W2 6LX (0171 725 3331).

AGE Concern

WESTMINSTER

Do you know a disabled older person who would like to attend a Day Care Centre? Age Concern Westminster has four Day Care Centres which offer the following services-

- Personal care - showers or bath;
- Midday lunch - catering for cultural and dietary needs;
- Transport to and from the Centres;
- A range of stimulating and interesting activities;
- Hairdressing;
- The chance to meet other people and chat;

...and the most caring, friendly staff you would wish to meet. Why not give a call to your local Centre for more information?

- *Sherborne Day Care Centre*, Winchester Street, Abbots Manor Estate, SW1V 4LP (0171 834 0064)
- *Thomson Day Care Centre*, 320 Enford Street, W1H 1DG (0171 262 3873)
- *Elgin Day Care Centre*, 63 Elgin Avenue, W9 2BX (0171 286 2043)
- *Pullen Day Care Centre*, 7-9 Moreton Street, SW1 (0171 932 0140).

GREATER LONDON FORUM

GLF

FOR THE ELDERLY

The Greater London Forum for the Elderly was set up in 1988 with the aim of giving older people a voice. Its main role is to set up and support local borough Forums throughout London, including the Westminster Senior Citizens Forum.

The Forum also organises training for older people. Forthcoming events include a training day on the *Peopling of London: the histories of ethnic minority communities in London* on 24 July at the Museum of London. For details of this and other events contact Kay or Carole at GLF, 54 Chalton Street, London NW1 1HS (tel. 0171 383 4008, fax 0171 387 3222).

National Pensioners Convention 15-18 June

The new government's review of pensions is sure to be high on the agenda of the National Pensioners Convention in Blackpool later this month. Last year's event attracted over 2,000 pensioners. Phone Catherine at VAW for details (0171 724 1143).

Sheltered and Supported Housing Review

Westminster City Council is currently reviewing its strategy for provision of sheltered and supported housing for older people. Sheltered housing blocks are generally purpose built with a resident warden who has daily contact with each tenant to ensure their well-being. They normally have a number of communal facilities such as kitchen/sitting room, laundry facilities and guest room. Supported housing schemes also have a warden who is resident either in the block or nearby but tenants receive a visit only once a week. These schemes generally lack communal facilities.

The review has identified a number of limitations to the current service, the chief of which is that support from the warden service depends on the type of accommodation occupied rather than the degree of need of the resident. There are older people living in general needs accommodation who at present have no access to a warden service and who may have greater need of support than those living in supported Housing. It is proposed to develop a more flexible model of support to enable more older people to stay in their own homes.

A key recommendation is to replace resident wardens in supported blocks with Non-residential Housing Support Officers who will have regular contact with a group of older tenants or lessees living in council accommodation. This service will be offered to all tenants/lessees living in flats previously designated as 'supported' and to other older people who qualify. Sheltered housing blocks will continue to have a resident warden.

Consultation is continuing. While there has been support for the broad principles of the review, some tenants have expressed concern at the prospect of losing their resident wardens. If you are interested in finding out more about the review or have any comments which you would like to make please contact Michelle Minsky, City of Westminster Housing Department, PO Box 240, 83 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0HW (0171 641 3436).

Westminster Senior Citizens' Forum Public Meeting - Housing into the millenium: prospects for older people

The Senior Citizens' Forum's next public meeting coincides with the Council's review of sheltered and supported housing, and provides older people with the opportunity to learn how Westminster plans to deal with housing for its 'ageing population'. Housing officers will outline plans and answer questions at the meeting on Thursday 26 June from 2-4pm at Council House, Marylebone Road. Contact Peter (0171 286 1486) or Gerry (0171 383 4008).

Brisk Walking Project

The Brisk Walking Project is a ten week programme aimed at the 50+ age group in the Westminster area. A group of 15 older people will go out for an hour's walk a week under the guidance and supervision of a qualified exercise tutor, Terry Clarke, who will advise on how to walk effectively to improve health. The aims of the project are to:

- reduce cardio-vascular disease;
- reduce the risk of osteoporosis;
- reduce the risk of accidents;
- reduce levels of stress.

If you are interested contact Maisie McKenzie or Pearl Darrel (0171 725 3436) at KCW Health Promotion.

Disability service changes

Portland House, Westminster Social Services' day centre for dsiabled people, closed to clients on May 23rd. A new purpose-built day centre is expected to be ready for opening by the end of August. In the transition period, the Physical Disability Business Unit will be based in a Portakabin on the site of the new building, Stag House, 38-46 Westbourne Park Road.

The new Duty Enquiry Line is 0171 727 1429 (8:30 - 4:30 pm, answerphone out of hours).

Local voices pack

Voluntary Action Westminster and KCW Health Authority have put together an information/training pack for local health professionals to guide and assist them in public consultation activities.

The pack builds on recently published guidelines from the NHS Executive by adding a summary and critique of local experience, providing contact names for further assistance and self-complete checklists to help with the planning and evaluation of activities including public meetings, focus groups, surveys, outreach work, developing user groups and involving users on committees, as evaluators or inspectors.

For further information, contact Catherine Flynn at VAW (0171 724 1143) or Katherine Woolley or Mike Silvera at the Health Authority (0171 725 3329/3304).

New Publications

- The new **Community Care Plan** for Westminster (1997-2000) is now available from Social Services Planning and Review Unit (0171 641 1898).

- The May edition of the **Disability Action Westminster** newsletter includes a benefits update as well as information about direct payments, transport and other issues. Contact DAW on 0171 266 2143.

- The **Mental Health Advocacy Project** have produced leaflets about their service in English, Cantonese, Bengali and standard Arabic. For copies contact Jonathan or Mona (0171 724 5802).

- Madlin Hewitt at Voluntary Action Westminster has edited a new edition of **Keeping in Touch** - a directory of newsletters in Westminster. The directory includes details of more than fifty local publications (for a copy call Madlin on 0171 724 1143).

Child Safety Week

Child Safety Week, an initiative of the Child Accident Prevention Trust, will take place between 23rd-29th June 1997. The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness about child accidents and highlight preventative measures around child safety. In Westminster the week will include displays in local libraries and clinics and first aid training for parents and children in schools.

If you would like to participate in the campaign, material is available direct from the Child Accident Prevention Trust on 0171 608 3828 and from KCW HA Department of Health Promotion and Professional Advice. Contact Maisie McKenzie (0171 725 3428) at KCW Health Promotion for further details.

Children's Services Forum

The Children's Services Forum is holding an open meeting for voluntary organisations working with children at 2:30 pm on Thursday 17th July at the Abbey Community Centre, 34 Great Smith Street, SW1P.

This will provide an opportunity for voluntary organisations to raise issues with senior officers in health, social services and education responsible for planning children's services in Westminster. For further details contact Liz Hill, Planning and Review Unit, Westminster Social Services (0171 798 2464) or Neil Orr at Voluntary Action Westminster (0171 724 1143).

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Westminster Health and Social Care

People with learning difficulties range from those who can live independently and hold down a job, to those who need substantial support with aspects of daily living. It is estimated that between 2% and 3% of the population has a learning difficulty (Department of Health figures, 1995), although it has only been with the gradual closure of long-stay hospitals in recent years that they have begun to have a real presence in the community.

• **In February 1997, 570 people with learning difficulties aged over 16 were known to Westminster social services.**

(***source: Community Care Plan, 1997-2000***).

Historically, people with learning difficulties have had very little say on the services they receive, and consultation, where it has taken place, has tended to involve carers rather than users themselves. The growth of the self-advocacy movement over the last decade has, however, begun to change perceptions of what people with learning difficulties want for themselves, and of what they are capable of achieving.

This month we look at the planning and provision of services for people with learning difficulties in Westminster, and what service users are doing themselves to make their voice heard.

Listening to people with learning difficulties

Consultation in 1997

Two days in February this year gave people with learning difficulties the opportunity to gather their ideas and present them to the planners and providers of services. The first, 'Talking Together', was a facilitated user-only event attended by about thirty-five people. The second, 'Working Together', involved users, carers, providers and planners of services in Westminster in a 'whole system' event. Both days were organised by or on behalf of the Joint Planning Team for adults with learning disabilities as part of their consultation programme.

The report 'Talking Together' focuses on people's views of present services, care management and assessment, and puts forward clear ideas which challenge the notion that people with learning difficulties cannot contribute to a debate on services at a 'strategic' level. Service users clearly stated that they wanted better and more accessible information about all services, more care managers, a greater choice in housing and day services and to be involved in choosing staff.

At the end of the second day, one service user asked the question that was on everyone's mind: 'what happens next?' Since then, a small group of people with learning difficulties has been meeting to try to make sure that something *does*. Their first step was to write to all professionals at the second day, asking 'one thing that you will do because of what we have said'. Responses were received from 17 of the 46 letters, and early indications are that service users' pro-activity is beginning to pay off.

Outcomes from consultation

☞ The Community Support Team, part of Westminster Day and Employment Services, is running a course over the summer to train and support service users to choose staff. A group has already written a job advert and spent time looking at what the job is and what is involved in choosing a new worker. This will be the first time that service users have taken part in interviews, and so far it has been very successful. The group is willing to share their experiences. Contact Claire Bendall on 0171 641 1536.

☞ Westminster Commissioning and Development Unit for People with Learning Disabilities has been working with the Housing Department to produce a newsletter to update people on changes and new developments in either Housing or Social Services. They have asked the 'Talking Together' group for feedback on their first edition before circulating it more widely and producing further editions.

☞ Westminster Society for people with Learning Disabilities plans to adopt a service user charter.

The group has passed the responses it received to the JPT to follow up, but plans to form a more permanent committee that will monitor and reflect on services and feed into the JPT. The JPT is expected shortly to circulate its own feedback to participants at both consultation days.

Joint Planning Team for adults with learning disabilities

The JPT is responsible for consultation on services for adults with learning disabilities in Westminster. If there are issues you would like to raise, please contact Vivienne Lukey, Chair, JPT for adults with learning disabilities, Westminster Social Services, 7th Floor, City Hall, Victoria Street, London SW1E 6QP (0171 641 1940).

News from services for people with learning difficulties

Social Services

A contract has been awarded to Heritage Care for the residential care of people living in Carlton Gate and Carlton Bridge (W9), starting on 1st August. Heritage have been asked to include their own plans for day activities for residents, based on each person's needs and desires and *in addition to* any services being received. If a successful model is developed, other residential care providers in Westminster will be encouraged to adopt the model.

Social Services is awaiting a report from a consultant on the feasibility of its proposal to develop the first floor at its Droop Street premises as a local resource for people with challenging needs and autism.

Housing and Social Services

A report has recently been published which has detailed plans for a joint classification system for housing on a joint database which will identify housing for people with 'special needs' (including people with learning difficulties) as soon as they become available. Appropriate persons on waiting lists will be prioritised and given preference. For further information, contact Russell Mobley 0171 641 1958.

Health

A GP project recently started at Parkside Health will establish a register of all GPs who have patients with a learning disability. They will ensure that the GP has information required for the person with a learning disability and send the GP an annual report on the individual (relevant information only) in relation to the health-based service received.

Paddington Integration Project

PIP provides continuing education for adults with learning difficulties.

South Westminster Project: Work begins in October 1997 to develop a new service in south Westminster tailored to the individual needs of users and carers in that area. The project's phases include: mapping and interviewing potential users; facilitating the setting up of self-advocacy and carer support groups in the south of the borough; accessing resources reporting on unmet need and setting up interest sessions with groups. This work is also to prepare people for the opening of a community resource in Great Peter Street in April/May 1998.

Computers: two new computers take PIP a step closer to its vision of opening a computer users' facility for people with learning difficulties which would be open at evenings and at weekends from September 1998.

Work preparation: PIP's 6-week taster course in work preparation, run in conjunction with Amberley College, has gone very well, with numbers attending far exceeding what was initially imagined. PIP will run this as a full course at Amberley College from September, and are in the process of refining it to fit into a B.Tec structure so that it can be accredited.

Future plans: PIP is looking for ways to fund two other pieces of work: a work-sustaining project focusing on social skills issues around staying in employment; and extending PIP's support network for people who want to do things but not for a full 5-day week. PIP are at 404-406 Edgware Rd, W2 1ED. tel. 0171 258 1122.

Westminster Volunteer Bureau

Since June 1996 Westminster Volunteer Bureau has had a part-time worker, Julian Daly, whose job has been to support people with learning difficulties to find and carry out voluntary work. Users attending a review day in May gave very positive feedback on the service, and decided to have a monthly meeting to share their experiences with one another.

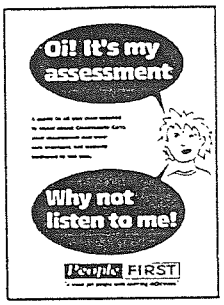
The Volunteer Bureau is always looking for volunteers who are people with learning difficulties. Julian and volunteers give talks at the request of groups around the borough. Anyone who is interested, or knows someone who might be, should contact Julian on Mondays, Tuesdays or Wednesday mornings on 0171 402 8076.

Camden and Westminster Citizen Advocacy

Camden and Westminster Citizen Advocacy are recruiting and training volunteers to act as advocates for adults with a learning disability with severe communication problems. Citizen Advocates befriend and support an individual, helping them to speak up for themselves and increase their involvement in the community. For further information contact Joanna Bell, Camden & Westminster Citizen Advocacy, 380 Harrow Road, W9 (0171 289 5051).

The Westminster Society for People with Learning Disabilities is looking for people to volunteer to work with adults with learning disabilities living in their own homes. For further details, contact Sophie Wyatt, Volunteer Co-ordinator on 0181 968 7376.

Learning Difficulty Publications



•*Oi! its my assessment* is a refreshingly clear guide to community care, assessment and care management written by people with learning difficulties for service users, care managers and support staff. The guide uses large print, plain language and pictures and has a useful section entitled 'Our questions'. £5.50 from People First London Boroughs. Tel. 0171 713 6400.

•A Mental Health Foundation enquiry concluded in October with the report *Building Expectations: Opportunities and Services for people with a Learning Disability*, which makes over 30 recommendations to Government, health, education and social services departments. Evidence was taken from over 600 people, half of them service users, on issues including sexuality, health care, accommodation, day services, employment and education. It costs £12.50, or £5.00 for an accessible version (£15.00 for the two) incl p&p from the Publications Department at the Mental Health Foundation. Tel. 0171 580 0145.

•*Give us a Voice: towards equality for black and minority ethnic people with learning difficulties* is based on research in Southwark in 1996 and concludes that many black and minority people with learning difficulties do not get the support they need. A discussion of key issues is set alongside stories by service users about their lives, an accessible summary for people with learning difficulties and suggested steps for the development of services. Available from Choice Publications at £7.50 + £1.76 p&p Tel. 0181 299 3030.

•*Plain Facts* magazine makes research findings accessible to people with learning difficulties. It looks at choosing staff, supported employment, making complaints, leaving hospital and adult education. For information 'phone Ruth Townsley at the Nora Fry Research Centre (0117 923 8137)

Westminster charging policy to stay

Westminster Social Services Committee have decided to continue with the community care charging policy following a review of the first year of its operation.

The revised Charging Policy came into effect from 1 April 1996, with most users of community care services having to pay a weekly charge based on income levels and the costs of services received. The review of the policy included a questionnaire to clients and meetings with the Parents Forum, Carers Forum and voluntary organisations. The Committee has agreed to make some modifications to the policy:

• All service users in receipt of three or less hours of service per week will now pay £2.50 a week. Previously, people in receipt of Attendance Allowance had to pay a minimum of £10 a week, regardless of the levels of services received.
• Service users receiving more than 3 hours service whose income is solely made up from state benefits will now pay a fixed rate charge of £2.50 or £10 a week (if in receipt of Attendance Allowance or equivalent). Previously, some of these users could have been liable for a higher charge.
• There will be better advertising of benefits checking and the waiver process, and assessment forms will be made clearer.

People with learning difficulties

Carers of people with learning difficulties have been particularly disappointed at the decision not to exclude this group from charges. When the policy was first introduced it was agreed to exclude users who receive services through the Mental Health care management service. This does not include people with learning disabilities even though they are defined under the Mental Health Act 1983 as being "mentally disordered" (the Act covers "mental illness, arrested or incomplete development of the mind and any other disorder or disability of mind").

The Parents Forum and the Westminster Society for People with Learning Disabilities both argued that it would be more consistent to exclude people with learning difficulties from charges, and that the financial implications of this would be minimal. People with learning difficulties account for only 31 out of the 2,207 clients assessed (1.4%), bringing in just £8000 of income. Many of the families already find that their income is inadequate for them to live on, and have suffered reductions in services such as a loss of grants for holidays, TV licences and telephone rental.

The national picture

Voluntary organisations locally and nationally feel that charging for community care services is unjust and could be seen as an additional tax on people who have no choice but to need services. Carers have argued that it places an extra financial burden on families who, by providing unpaid care to their relatives, have saved local authorities a considerable amount of money over the years. Despite these objections, the majority of local authorities have now introduced charging for community care services. In the absence of clear guidance to the contrary from central government, charging is likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

Independent Service User Group

The Independent Service Users' Group is seeking new members in the run-up to the launch of its questionnaires for patients at local hospitals on September 1st. ISUG aims to improve hospital and social services by finding out the views of people who use them on matters as diverse as transport, food and the helpfulness of staff. The group, made up of people who have themselves been patients at hospitals or 'users' of social services, is in a unique position to hear honest views. Those who are keen to contribute to better quality care can find out more about ISUG without obligation at social gatherings throughout the summer. Opportunities for involvement range from admin and publicity work to delivering questionnaires and news-sheets to a local GP surgery. For further information, contact Guy Lomax (0171 730 4011) or Catherine Flynn (0171 724 1143).

Advice Workers Forum

The June meeting of the Advice Workers Forum featured presentations from Beryl Arundel (Westminster Amalgamated Charity) and Sara Hepburn (Carers Network Westminster).

• *Westminster Amalgamated Charity* provide small grants to individuals in need of assistance because they are on a low income or are disabled. Grants can be provided for items such as furniture, clothing and domestic appliances or to pay for a holiday. Grants are available only to people living, working or studying it the Old City of Westminster (south of Oxford Street, including Victoria, Pimlico, Mayfair and Soho). For further information call Beryl Arundel, Grants Administrator, Westminster Amalgamated Charity, 6 New Bridge Street, EC4V 6AB (0171 353 9991).

• *Carers Network Westminster* provide advice and support for carers and are happy to take referrals from other advice agencies. Most advice workers come into contact with people who are looking after a sick or disabled friend or relative, but they may not define themselves as carers. Advice workers can help by asking people about their caring responsibilities and informing them about what support is available for carers. Carers Network produce a range of leaflets and booklets (call Sara Hepburn, 0171 932 0026).

The Advice Workers Forum is open to all voluntary sector workers in Westminster providing advice. The next meeting is at 2:30 pm on August 6th 1997 (venue to be confirmed). Call Madlin Hewitt at VAW for further details (0171 724 1143).

Publications

• The **National Meningitis Trust** have produced a pack of leaflets, posters and factsheets. These include information about how to spot the symptoms of meningitis in babies, children and adults, and about coping with life after the illness. Voluntary Action Westminster have some copies of the pack to distribute; call Madlin Hewitt (0171 724 1143) if you would like one. The National Meningitis Trust has a 24 hour Support Line: 0345 538118.

• KCW HA Health Promotion have an information pack **Staying well in later life**, with leaflets on home safety, exercise, smoking, drinking, avoiding falls and so on. For a copy of the pack, call Maisie McKenzie or Pearl Darrell (0171 725 3428).

• The Core Trust has just published a book funded by the King's Fund entitled **The Holistic Approach to Addiction.** Author Geraldine McEwan says the book is intended for use by professionals in health services, social work and probation, and defines detoxification and treatment for drug and alchohol misuse using alternative and complementary therapies and counselling. Priced at £35, it is available from Carolyn MacDonald at the Core Trust on 0171 258 3031.

Westminster Senior Citizens' Forum

The second open meeting of the Westminster Senior Citizens' Forum on 26 June was well attended, despite torrential rain, and focused on housing for older people in the borough.

Speakers included Michelle Minsky from the Service Development Group of the Housing Department, who outlined proposals in the current review of sheltered and supported housing, Richard Turcell, Social Services Team Leader for community care services in the south, Jackie Goodman, Warden Manager, who spoke about the Piper Alarm Scheme, and Cathy McCarthy from Paddington Churches Housing Association.

The Forum was particularly concerned at the lack of support to private tenants, for example, in decorating their homes, and heard that there was at present no 'staying put' scheme in Westminster which could provide such a service. The problem of inadequate support at weekends, particularly in residential accommodation, was also raised from the floor. The Forum's committee is considering how to take these issues forward. For further information, contact Catherine at VAW (0171 724 1143).

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Westminster Health and Social Care
Voluntary Action Westminster August 1997

Advocacy in Westminster

Advocacy involves speaking or acting on behalf of another person to make sure they receive their entitlements. The need for advocacy implies that certain groups of people are at a disadvantage in exercising their rights and accessing the services they need, either because they are not able to express their views, or because their views are not listened to.

Advocacy plays a vital role in health and social services for people who find themselves anxious, bewildered or aggrieved as a result of their experience and in need of an ally who can offer uncritical support and information or representation at key times. Community care's commitment to take the views of individual users into account in providing services signals the need for strategic support to the development of effective advocacy.

Advocacy research project

Research just completed by Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority set out to get a picture of the range of advocacy activity taking place across Westminster. As well as identifying ways of supporting and strengthening existing work, the project aims to identify significant gaps in provision that will inform future funding decisions.

Over 30 organisations returned questionnaires, describing themselves as undertaking some form of advocacy in areas as diverse as housing, DSS benefits, legal matters, community care and health. Advocacy is variously defined as 'advice', 'negotiating with statutory agencies', 'accompanying carers to meetings and speaking on their behalf', 'help in commenting or complaining about a service' and 'working with parents to empower them to act for themselves'.

Specialist advocacy - disabled people draw a blank

Dedicated advocacy projects operate for users of mental health services, for adults with severe learning difficulties, for older people, including those with dementia and for people with HIV and AIDS. Given the tendency for services to develop along 'care group' lines, the most notable exception here is people with physical disabilities, for whom there is no specialist advocacy service in Westminster. Disabled people may feel the lack of such a service more keenly with the imminent implementation of Direct Payments legislation and the multiplication of choices and possibilities for misunderstandings or even conflicts which this may give rise to.

Developing advocacy: obstacles and opportunities

Of 33 organisations offering some form of advocacy locally, 15 reported that their service was available in languages other than English. The main languages used were Arabic (5 organisations), Cantonese (4), Bengali (2), Punjabi (2) and Gujerati (2). Four organisations identified difficulties in attracting volunteers from minority ethnic groups or language barriers between English-speaking staff and non-English speaking volunteers as major obstacles to developing effective advocacy within their service. One group suggested that paid workers from minority ethnic communities should be funded to do a mixture of professional advocacy and recruiting volunteer advocates.

The issue of funding was raised by a number of organisations. Several drew attention to the need for start-up support, while others called for long-term financial security for advocacy projects. Provider resistance and the failure of agencies to communicate with one another were noted as hindrances to effective advocacy. Some organisations thought that training for providers on the principles and practice of advocacy might address this problem.

There was some interest in the establishment of an advocacy network which could share information and break down the isolation felt by some people engaged in advocacy work. A network might also be able more effectively to influence services and policies by providing a coherent voice on issues of local importance.

Diary date: the full report of the Advocacy Research Project will be launched on September 19 from 2-4pm at KCW HA, 50 Eastbourne Terrace W2. This will be followed by a discussion of issues highlighted. Contact Mike Silvera 0171 725 3304 for further information or to book a place.

Models of advocacy in Westminster

In Westminster, as elsewhere, there are many models of advocacy in use. Each of these may be more or less appropriate in a particular situation, or with a particular group of people. Key differences include who provides the advocacy (volunteers, peers, paid workers), and whether it is provided in the long term or just in a one-off 'crisis' situation.

Self advocacy

Self advocacy refers to someone acting on their own behalf to regain power and control over their own lives. This can apply to individuals or groups such as user groups (collective advocacy). It is usually the starting point, and the end goal for all advocacy.

Paid advocacy

Paid advocates usually work with users of a particular service. Most work is likely to be short-term or 'crisis' advocacy, but it usually aims to promote greater self-advocacy both for the individual and groups of users.

A local example is Westminster Mental Health Advocacy Project. The Project has two full-time workers who provide support to people using, or wishing to use, mental health services in Westminster. Their work includes providing information, drafting letters, accompanying people to meetings, and so on. The extent of their involvement depends entirely on the wishes of the user. In some cases the workers simply provide information to enable people to speak on their own behalf (self advocacy). Workers and users may jointly ask questions at meetings (joint advocacy), or the user may prefer the worker to speak for them (representative advocacy). Further details from Jonathan Coe or Mona Lesforis, WMHAP, 37 Chapel Street, NW1 5DP (0171 724 5802).

Volunteer advocacy

Volunteers can be recruited and trained to act as advocates, either in the long term (see Citizen advocacy) or with specific issues. Westminster Advocacy Service for Senior Residents are an example of the latter. They provide volunteer advocates "to give a voice to older people who, for various reasons, are unable to represent their own interests effectively". Areas of work include supporting older people to obtain health or social services, or to make complaints. Contact Irene Kohler, WASSR, 55 Dean Street, W1V 5HJ (0171 439 3131).

Citizen advocacy

According to Joanna Bell of Camden and Westminster Citizen Advocacy "Citizen Advocacy's objective is to link an ordinary member of the community on a one-to-one basis with someone who is disadvantaged and/or vulnerable, in order to support, befriend and speak up on their behalf".

"The scheme was originally developed in long-stay mental handicap hospitals in the USA, but there are about 150 schemes in the UK working on behalf of people with a learning disability in the community".

Volunteer advocates are recruited and trained to develop partnerships with people who may require longer-term support with a range of issues. The Westminster project is targeting people with a learning disability and severe communication difficulties, and after a year of operation now has 8 partnerships which are developing well.

If anyone would like to know more about the project please contact Joanna Bell, Camden and Westminster Citizen Advocacy, 380 Harrow Road, W9 2HY (tel. 0171 289 5051).

Peer advocacy

Some disability groups would argue that it can be disempowering for a disabled person to be represented by a non-disabled advocate. This issue is addressed by peer advocacy, where the advocate (paid or unpaid) shares a similar experience or situation with the person being supported.

One example is the Advocacy Project provided by the UK Coalition of People living with HIV and AIDS. Here all advocacy is undertaken by people who are themselves living with HIV. As well as helping clients to resolve their individual problems, the project aims to make sure that issues raised are followed up with providers and commissioners of services. Contact the Advocacy Project, 250 Kennington Lane, SE11 (tel. 0171 820 8877).

Westminster Joint Finance Priorities - 1998/99

Westminster Joint Consultative Committee has agreed the priorities for next year's round of Joint Finance. Joint Finance is Health Authority money jointly allocated by the Health Authority and Social Services to fund innovative services. It is estimated that around £430,000 will be available for new projects in 1998/99. Each of the Joint Planning Teams has identified priorities for service development, and voluntary organisations and others will be invited to submit proposals which respond to these:

- Learning Disabilities JPT:
  - user consultation and self-advocacy, especially proposals which consider how to involve people with more severe learning disabilities and communication difficulties;
  - a sexual health worker to develop policies, train staff and provide counselling in this sensitive area.

- Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment JPT:
  - advocacy services to work with physically disabled and sensory impaired adults under 65 years of age.

- Children's Services Forum:
  - mental health;
  - disabled children;
  - drug and alcohol misuse.

- Mental Health JPT:
  - service to provide practical and emotional support to people with mental health problems placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation;
  - bridging scheme to link people with mental health problems into mainstream leisure/ recreational/ adult education facilities.

- Drugs and alcohol JPT:
  - home support for drug users and alcohol users, including those with dual diagnosis;
  - services for vulnerable young people at risk of substance misuse;
  - detached support services for stimulant users (amphetamines, cocaine and crack cocaine).

- HIV JPT:
  - initiatives to support individuals planning to return to work due to beneficial effects of combination therapies;
  - culturally specific services for African people affected by HIV.

- Older People JPT:
  - staying put schemes to enable older people to remain in their own homes.

- Health and Community Care Forum on Race:
  - proposals to develop information for ethnic minority groups and to raise awareness about how communities can participate in the commissioning process.

- Healthy Alliances JPT:
  - community development projects with a focus on health;
  - projects which aim to decrease tobacco consumption;
  - small grants scheme.

Proposals which do not meet with the above priorities may still be considered, particularly if they cover more than one care group. One cross care group priority that has been identified is community transport.

Further details of the priorities and how to apply for joint finance will be included in the application pack. This will be sent out to voluntary organisations at the end of August. First stage proposals (one side A4) will be discussed by the JCC on October 29th. For further information contact Neil Orr at VAW (0171 724 1143).

Funding opportunities

Drugs and young people

The Health Education Authority and Glaxo Wellcome are offering support for projects working with young people keen to expand or develop education/prevention work with a drugs focus. Grants between £500 and £10,000 are being offered for projects targeting hard to reach and or high risk groups of young people aged 11-25. For an application pack contact Dave Wiseman, Drugs and Solvents Campaign, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9TX (tel. 0171 413 1958/2052). Forms need to be completed and returned by 30 September 1997.

Mental health: tackling stigma

The Health Education Authority has formed a partnership with the national mental health charity, Mind, to tackle the stigma and taboos surrounding mental health problems. Mind are distributing resources including leaflets and postcards aimed particularly at 16-24 year olds. They will also be running a grants scheme to fund innovative activities which address the issue of stigma and mental health. For further information contact Ralph Coates, Project Manager, Mind, Granta House, 15-19 Broadway, E15 4BQ (tel. 0181 522 1741).

New Projects

Young Carers Research Project

Westminster Carers Service is a voluntary organisation which provides a domiciliary respite care service to carers of heavily dependent people living in the City of Westminster. The organisation has received Joint Finance funding to carry out an 18 month research project addressing the needs of young carers in Westminster.

For the purposes of the project, young carers are described as 'children or young people under 18 carrying out significant caring tasks and assuming a level of responsibility for another person, which would usually be taken by an adult'. There are an estimated 150 - 200 young carers in the City of Westminster.

The aims of the project are to identify this hidden group of young people, and with a qualitative approach, provide an account of their responsibilities and their needs. This study will aim to explore ways of accessing resources and develop services for this group. Whilst conducting the research, Westminster Carers Service will be offering immediate, adequate support to young carers through its domiciliary respite care service.

If you would like further information on this project or would like to register an interest, please do not hesitate to contact Natasha Munoz (researcher) at Westminster Carers Service, St James-The-Less Centre, Vauxhall Bridge Road SW1V (0171 976 5999.)

Accident Prevention Project

Dutch Pot Lunch and Social Club, which works mainly with African Caribbean older people in north Westminster, have a new Joint Finance funded Accident Prevention Project. The project aims to raise awareness amongst older people and their carers of how to minimise the risks of accidents, and to work with all relevant agencies to promote a safer environment.

For further details contact Fetsum Berhan, Accident Prevention Project Worker, Dutch Pot, Fernhead Road Methodist Church, Fernhead Road, W9 3EA (0181 960 4357).

Council Disability Policy

Westminster City Council adopted a new Council wide disability policy at June's Policy and Resources Committee, The disability policy covers all departments of the Council and has three clear aims:

- to increase access to information and communication;
- to increase access to services;
- to make the City a more accessible place to live, visit and work.

The policy seeks to develop the role of disabled people in the planning and delivering of services, offer Council staff Disability training and ensure that the Council's contracts and specifications reflect the needs of disabled people.

The policy was developed in consultation with disabled people of all ages and a variety of disabilities as well as voluntary organisations and carers. It is hoped that disabled people will continue to be involved in taking the policy forward and monitoring and reviewing its effectiveness.

The Policy will be launched publicly in the Autumn, however copies of the document are available from Rubina Hassanali at Westminster City Council at 64 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6QP or by telephone and minicom on 0171 641 2948. The policy is currently available in standard and large print and on tape. If you are interested in monitoring and reviewing the policy and are disabled, please contact Rubina on the above number.

Westminster Health and Social Care

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Westminster Health and Social Care

Voluntary Action Westminster

September 1997

Direct Payments

When in 1974 the *Times* published a letter from four disabled people living in a residential home asking if there was anyone else out there who wanted to escape, they found their post bag quickly flooded. Disabled people wanted support to live their lives, not services to fit their lives around. The implementation of the Community Care (Direct Payments) Act in April 1997 offers the possibility of greater independence and control. But success depends on more than a simple bank transfer. This month we explain the facts and unravel some of the issues in the run-up to Westminster's pilot scheme in October.

What the new law says

The new law gives local authorities the power to make direct cash payments to individuals, in lieu of community care services. People then purchase care and support for themselves, and the authority takes a back-seat role, ensuring that the money is being spent appropriately and cost- effectively.

It is for each authority to decide whether or not to make direct payments available. A recent survey by the Policy Studies Institute found that all but four intend to set up a scheme. Users will have the option to participate, but will not be compelled to do so, and may choose to remain with existing services.

The local authority is required to assess the service users' ability to understand the implications of direct payments before they are accepted onto a scheme, and must ensure that the individual has the appropriate level of support to manage their responsibilities as an employer.

The legislation applies to all people between 18 and 64 who are not subject to restrictions by the criminal justice system (eg; people who have been sectioned under mental health law), but local authorities have so far focused on people with physical disabilities. Recent research by Values Into Action (VIA) found that people with learning difficulties were at risk of being excluded. Ian Davey of the Association of Directors of Social Services felt that a practical obstacle was lack of extra money to set up schemes and to fund advocates to support clients with learning difficulties (*Community Care*, 21/8/97). VIA has since received funding from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation for an information and research project into direct payments for people with learning difficulties.

The recipe for success

Francis Hasler from the National Centre for Independent Living, speaking at the 'Community Care Live' conference earlier this month, agreed that lack of 'pump-priming' had been a problem, and went on to stress the need for ongoing support to 'direct payees' if schemes were to lead to increased independence. The recipe for success had four essential ingredients: quality information; effective advocacy; access to training; and peer support.

Local pilot

Westminster's 6-month pilot will offer people 1:1 advice and assistance in managing direct payments and the opportunity to join a peer support group. Prospective pioneers of the scheme have begun to identify the skills and knowledge they will need to make it work, and will have guidance on employing people from the council's personnel section at their next workshop.

The future

Subject to a review, Westminster's pilot may be expanded from April 98. As far as the national picture is concerned, the Labour government has so far made no commitment to extend direct payments to the over 65s, despite advocating this while in opposition as the bill was being debated. Challenges are likely in the coming months from pensioners' groups.

Sceptics maintain that government support for direct payments thinly veils an impulse to make 'savings' in local authority services. But despite the Gloucester ruling earlier this year, users know that 'cost effectiveness' does not have to mean 'cheaper'. They will be able to judge for themselves whether direct payments are a success when they no longer feel the need to escape.

For information about the Westminster pilot, contact Glynnis Joffe at Social Services, tel. 0171 380 9065. minicom 0171 380 9389.

Community Care LIVE! - 3-4 September 1997

Community Care LIVE! was a major social care event held at Kensington Town Hall. Organised by Community Care magazine, the event featured debates, seminars and workshops on a range of current social care issues. Neil Orr and Catherine Flynn report.

User involvement

Demand was great for sessions focusing on the practical experience of user participation. Slots were frustratingly limited to half an hour, with no time for discussion, but useful lessons were still there for the taking.

People with learning difficulties

Ken Simons, Research Fellow at the Nora Fry Research Centre, University of Bristol, had one main message: that no single method of involvement works for all people, and that for user participation to be inclusive, there need to be diverse ways of doing it. A clear strategy was needed to embed user involvement within services rather than leaving it as a luxury for when time permits. Ken swept aside fears that increased involvement would raise expectations, saying that this was 'the whole point'.

HIV/AIDS

The London Lighthouse Service Users' Consultative Forum meets every 6 weeks and is run by an elected group of 10. Neil Fraser, the Chair, was satisfied that although only an advisory body, it has achieved much in recent months: access to the building has been improved and extra disabled parking spaces have been secured outside; users have enjoyed increased access to complementary therapies and safer drinking water. The Forum tries to make sure that at least one rep. is in the building 5-6 days per week.

Disability

Clare Evans, former Director of the Wiltshire Users' Network, spoke of how 'riddling the system' was the only way to ensure that involvement was directed towards change. Network members have accordingly been proactive in creating their own opportunities to influence the shape of services in their area, taking a lead in policy development, acting as advisors, training professionals and providing information to other service users.

Mental Health

One participant in the Mental Health Foundation's recent 'Strategies for Living' project voiced a powerful critique of much 'user involvement' work when reflecting on his own role: 'It was different. We were active researchers. We were not appearing in a test tube near you to be prodded and poked to see what makes us tick and to work out how to make us tick more efficiently'.

Housing and community care

This session focused on the importance of working together to develop community care strategies that integrate housing. Peter Arnold, a housing researcher at University of Lincolnshire and Humberside, argued that housing is the key to independent living and the ordinary life experiences that community care aims to achieve.

John Belcher, Chief Executive of the Anchor Trust, stressed the links between housing and health, particularly for older people. Older people aged 75+ are more likely than other age groups to live in poor quality housing. More than half live in their own homes, many of which are poorly maintained and difficult to heat. At the same time, older people are more susceptible to hypothermia and other health conditions linked to cold and damp housing.

John gave examples of a number of positive initiatives, drawing on Anchor's experience as a major voluntary provider of housing and other services to older people.

In the UK, there are 275,000 units of sheltered housing for older people. With the addition of flexible support, many older people with high levels of need can be helped to remain in the community in sheltered housing. Anchor is building all new housing to lifetime standards, with wheelchair access and so on, so that older residents will be able to remain in the same home even if they become frailer. Community resource centres linked to sheltered housing schemes can help overcome isolation and integrate older residents into the local community.

Housing repairs schemes, such as Anchor Staying Put, also have an important role. For instance delays in hospital discharge may be due to inappropriate housing. In Hackney, health and local authorities have funded a staying put scheme linked to hospital discharge.

John Belcher argued that preventative services linked to housing can promote a good quality of life and reduce the demand for more expensive hospital and residential services. However, their development is being undermined by high eligibility criteria for community care and continuing care. This point was reiterated by Anthony Douglas, Director of Social Services in Havering, who identified a conflict between asking users what they *want* and social services defining increasingly narrowly what people *need*.

Paul Boateng - Health Minister

Paul Boateng, the Junior Health Minister, spoke at Community Care LIVE! on "The new political landscape". The Minister, who has particular responsibility for community care, spoke of "care as a positive strategy to enable and empower the community" with an emphasis on outcomes of "independence and choice". Although he outlined few concrete proposals at this stage, he did give some idea of the priorities of the new government:

• mental health: the reform of the mental health system is a major priority in order "to provide a full range of services according to need". Areas identified included reducing "unnecessary calls on acute services", evaluating the effectiveness of interventions, and addressing the unmet needs of minority ethnic communities and of children and adolescents.

• prevention: the government is committed to measures "to prevent ill health", and has appointed Tessa Jowell as the first Minister for Public Health to work across government departments to this end.

• user involvement: the Minister stated that he could not "emphasise enough the importance this government attaches to users". He criticised the notion of "consultation as a passage of time rather than a specific activity" and stressed the importance of people being informed "how their views are contributing to planning".

• partnership: disincentives to partnership between health, social services, housing and the voluntary sector need to be removed.

Questions from the floor revealed a certain scepticism in the audience about how much change could be achieved without significant new resources. On this count, the Minister was able to offer little encouragement.

The future of mental health services

This session featured a range of perspectives on the future of mental health services. Marjorie Wallace from SANE reiterated her view that community care had been a "recipe for chaos, confusion and neglect"

A more positive view was put forward by Judi Clements, Chief Executive, national MIND, who argued that the shift from "institutional to community care" was "undoubtedly the right shift", despite the shortcomings of its implementation.

She identified public attitudes to mental health as a major issue. A MIND survey found that 72% of people believed that people with mental health problems should be cared for in the community. But there is an underlying fear and ignorance that manifests itself in both prejudice and NIMBYism. A survey of mental health users found that almost half had been abused in public, 14% physically attacked and 26% forced to move home because of harassment. Two thirds of health and local authorities have encountered community opposition to mental health facilities in the last five years. On the other hand, in all cases opposition faded once the project opened.

Peter Ryan from Middlesex University suggested that mental health services should promote recovery, "a way of living a satisfying, hopeful and contributing life even with limitations caused by illness". With long term support this is a realistic goal for most people.

More than 50 psychiatric hospitals are due to be partially or fully closed within the next few years. Ryan argued that where the money from such closures is reinvested in community mental health services it is possible to successfully develop the range of support needed for client-centred care. In many cases however, resources are diverted to meet other priorities.

Parkside Health AGM

Parkside Health is the NHS Trust responsible for providing community health services across most of Westminster (except for SW1), as well as in North Kensington and in Brent. Parkside are holding four local annual general meetings which local people and voluntary organisations are invited to attend. The details for Westminster are as follows:

• Marylebone and the West End, 7 pm, 29 September 1997 at House of St Barnabas in Soho, 1 Greek Street, W1V 6NQ.

• Paddington and North Kensington, 7 pm, 30 September 1997 at Isaac Newton Centre, 108a Lancaster Road, W1.

Meetings are also being held in Wembley and in Willesden. For further information contact Parkside Health, 0181 451 8190.

Health Authority: five year strategy

Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority has published a new five year strategy, setting out its future direction for 1998-2003. The Health Authority will be continuing with its move towards locality commissioning, with the aim of finding "local solutions for local problems". This means that more decisions about which services to commission will be taken at a local level. There is a commitment to listening to local people to inform this process, with better links with users, carers and voluntary organisations. In Westminster there are three localities: Paddington, Marylebone and Victoria.

The strategy sets out key principles of health care provision, and reiterates the Health Authority's prioritisation of mental health. For a copy, please contact Lisa Strong on 0171 725 3202.

St Mary's: new phone number

The telephone number for the main switchboard at St Mary's Hospital and the Western Eye Hospital has changed from 0171 725 6666 to 0171 886 6666.

Electric blanket checks

Using electric blankets that are old, damaged and have been stored incorrectly can sometimes be very dangerous. The Cities of London and Westminster Home and Community Safety Council are sponsoring free electric blanket tests during October. Just bring along your blanket and it will be tested by a Consumer Protection Officer. Information on home safety and security will also be available.

Sessions will take place every weekday morning between 10 am - 12 noon from the 6th to 24th October 1997 at Westminster Council House, Marylebone Road, NW1. In the afternoons, tests will be available at a range of venues including libraries and Age Concern day centres. For a full programme contact Paul Mutimer at City of Westminster, 0171 641 1320.

Basic first aid training

For voluntary sector workers who work with older people

Having first aid knowledge can help you save someone's life. At the very least, casualties can be made comfortable and minor injuries attended to before the emergency services arrive. This half-day course is designed to give you a chance to learn and practice life support skills. It includes:

- an introduction to first aid.
- dealing with unconscious casualties.
- resuscitation.
- treating burns, fractures, sprains and shock.

Date: 2 October 1997
Time: 9:30 am - 12:30 pm or 1:00 -5:00 pm
Venue: Voluntary Action Westminster
37 Chapel Street
NW1 5DP

To book a place, or for further information, contact Pearl Darrel, KCW HA Department of Health Promotion and Professional Advice, 0171 725 3437.

Social Services Training Programme

Westminster Social Services Training Unit have issued their new Social Services and Inter-Agency Training Programme. The Programme includes details of more than 100 courses between October 1997 and March 1998, many of which are open to the voluntary sector at no cost. Among the subjects covered are community care, child protection, drug use and mental health. For a copy of the programme, call the unit on 0171 641 2478.

Westminster City Council Social Services

Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority

Consultation events 1997
(provisional dates)

Meeting for the Voluntary Sector
Friday 24 October 1997, a.m.

Public Meeting
Tuesday 4 November 1997, p.m.

Further details will be circulated as soon as they have been finalised.

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Westminster Health and Social Care

Voluntary Action Westminster

October 1997

World Mental Health Day (WMHD) is an international campaign celebrated on 10th October. The theme this year was "positive images, positive steps", with the aim being to put across the messages that:

- mental health concerns everyone;
- mental health problems are common - anyone can experience them;
- everyone can take positive steps to improve their mental well-being and that of others;
- people with mental health problems have a valuable contribution to make.

World Mental Health Day was marked by a number of events locally:

• The Feel Good Day at St Paul's Church Centre, Rossmore Road, NW1 attracted over 150 local people. A range of activities to promote positive mental health were held throughout the day including relaxation, massage, dance, art, flower arranging and ear acupuncture. The Day was supported by local health professionals and community groups including the North Westminster Chinese Women's Group and the Lisson Grove Bengali Women's Group who provided food, and the disabled women's group WEDGE who organised communal singing. Further information from Peter Musgrave (St Paul's Community Project, 0171 724 9170).

• An event for Black Users of mental health services was held at Yaa Asentawaa Centre, featuring music, dancing, comedy, African Caribbean food and information stalls about local services. The event was organised by Sharon Donaldson from North West London Mental Health Trust housing support service (0171 266 5592) in partnership with Westminster Race Equality Council, Westminster Association for Mental Health, Westminster Mental Health Advocacy Project and other local services.

• Staff from Lisson Grove Health Centre coordinated an information stall in Church Street market (contact Oma Ramroop, 0171 724 2391), while Queens Park Health Centre put on a similar stall in Harrow Road.

• KCW Health Authority Department of Health Promotion held a major conference on mental well-being for young people. The event brought together 80 young people from schools in Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster, and included speakers from Youth Drinkline, the Samaritans, KCW Health Authority and the Health Information Project in Kensington and Chelsea. Focus groups of young people explored their understanding of mental well-being, what makes them feel happy or down and what they do when they feel like this. They also discussed what support should be available for young people with mental health problems. The Health Authority plans to use the young people's views to inform decisions about the future development of services for this group.

• *Fidelma Carter at KCW Health Promotion is compiling a report on World Mental Health Day in Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster. If you did anything to mark the day let her know so that she can include it (0171 725 3442)*

Joint Mental Health Strategy

The Joint Mental Health Strategy for Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster is now available. This strategy was drawn up jointly by KCW Health Authority, the City of Westminster and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. It sets out a shared vision and approach to the planning and commissioning of mental health services, as well as providing a useful overview of levels of need in KCW and of current services.

The strategy recognises "the valuable role offered by the voluntary sector in ensuring diversity and choice across the full range of severity of illness" and talks of "an expanding role for the voluntary sector". Advocacy is described as "an essential element of a comprehensive service".

The authorities give a commitment "to the involvement of users in both the provision of services and the planning and development of services". It is also acknowledged that there is "not yet sufficient information about the needs of those caring for a person with a severe and enduring mental health illness".

If you would like a copy, please call 0171 725 3326.

Patients' councils launched

New patients' councils have been launched at the Gordon and Patterson hospitals in Westminster. Each Council provides a safe and confidential forum for in-patients to raise collective issues and take them to hospital managers and staff and effect change.

The Councils aim:
- To increase the user friendliness of services;
- to empower service users;
- to improve mental health services at the hospitals from a user perspective;
- to influence hospital practice and policy;
- to promote high standards of care for in-patients.

Council meetings are facilitated by two support workers, Sharon Matthews and Jo Searing, who have been service users themselves. They are supported and managed by Westminster Mental Health Advocacy Project. For further information, contact Sharon or Jo at Westminster Mental Health Advocacy Project, Voluntary Action Westminster, 37 Chapel Street, NW1 5DP (0171 724 5802).

New groups

British Epilepsy Association

A new support group for people with epilepsy has been set up locally. The North Westminster Branch of the British Epilepsy Association will be meeting from 7 - 9 pm on the third Wednesday of every month at St Paul's Church Centre, Rossmore Road, NW1. The next meeting will be on November 19th. For further details call Jack Pearce on 0171 794 2733.

Around 420,000 people have epilepsy in the UK, making it the most common serious neurological condition. The British Epilepsy Association have a national freephone helpline: 0800 309030.

COSMIC

COSMIC (Children of St Mary's Intensive Care) is a new charity set up raise money for the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit at St Mary's Hospital. Money raised by COSMIC will be used to buy equipment, fund research and provide accommodation for parents who are away from home. Further details from Beverley Habibi, COSMIC, Paediatric Department, St Mary's Hospital, QEQM Wing, South Wharf Road, W2 1NY (0171 725 6179)

Directory of user and carer groups

Voluntary Action Westminster have produced a new **Directory of user and carer groups (health and social care)** for Westminster. The directory aims to help professionals working in local health, social care and housing services to keep in touch with local voices and keep local people informed of their activities. It includes details of more than eighty user and carer groups. For a copy please contact Catherine Flynn (0171 724 1143)

Social Services and Westminster Grants

In June, the City Council decided to devolve its Grants budget to Service committees. In previous years decisions on Council grants for voluntary organisations have been taken by the Council's Grants sub-committee. This year grants deemed to relate to social services will be dealt with by the Social Services Committee, and others allocated to Housing or Education and Leisure accordingly.

On 18 September Social Services (with Housing) held a meeting for voluntary organisations affected by the changes, who expressed a number of concerns.

The committee structure

Many organisations do not fit neatly into the committee structure. Their services may cross the boundaries of social services, housing and education and they fear that being allocated to one committee may work to their disadvantage. Officers responded that the committees would be working closely together.

Matching funding

In the past grants have consisted of two elements - a core grant and matching funding linked to how much income organisations receive from other sources. Matching funding, which accounts for up to 50% of some grants, is now to be scrapped.

Officers argued that this simply reflects the fact that most organisations do not distinguish between the two elements. An organisation's new single core grant could be equal to the amount of the previous combined grant, but there is no guarantee that matching funding will automatically be added in this way.

Funding criteria

Officers tabled criteria which they suggested would be used to assess grant applications this year. After discussion they agreed to withdraw some of these because they had not been circulated to all organisations applying (some of whom had already completed applications) and they did not relate to the information required on the application form.

There will be discussion over the next year about future criteria. Voluntary organisations are concerned that grant funding could be too closely linked to social services' priorities. While social services are increasingly targeted on those with the highest levels of need, voluntary sector services play a vital preventative role by meeting a broader range of needs.

Social services budget

The funds devolved to social services have not been formally 'ringfenced', i.e. there is no guarantee that the money will all be spent on grant funding. Councillors have indicated that they will try to maintain grant funding at its current level, but concerns remain that in the event of any budget crisis money will be diverted from grants to fund other social services' commitments.

Contracts

Major grants of more than £50,000 have in the past been linked to service level agreements. These agreements are to be scrapped following legal advice that they amount to legally binding contracts. Voluntary organisations are receiving conflicting messages about what will happen next. It is unclear at present whether this year grants will be made without service agreements or contracts attached, or whether existing service agreements will be replaced with contracts.

Voluntary Action Westminster's position is that moving from a grant to a contract would be welcomed by some organisations, particularly if it was linked to longer term funding (e.g. three years rather than one year at a time). However new contracts need to be properly negotiated and there may be legal and organisational pitfalls in using current service agreements as the basis for contracts. In the mean time, VAW agrees with the findings of the Council's grants review that "clear formal monitoring tied in to grant payments should go a long way to settling any concerns about ensuring value for money... irrespective of the existence of any service agreement" (Policy & Resources Committee, 30 June 1997).

The future

Next year's grants round is likely to see further changes to the application, assessment and decision-making process. Officers have given a welcome commitment that "there will be full consultation with the voluntary sector about any proposals".

Events

Public Meeting

This year's public meeting on health and social care will take place from 2:30 - 4:30 pm on 4th November 1997 at the Council House, 97 Marylebone Road, NW1. Members of the public will be able to ask questions about local services directly to senior officers and members from both Westminster Social Services and Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority. Further details from Jubin Mama at KCW HA (0171 725 3318).

World AIDS Day

KCW HA Department of Health Promotion and Professional Advice are organising two half day courses on *Running a high profile health event for World AIDS Day (1 December)*. The aim is to illustrate how to plan, organise and implement health promotion activities for World AIDS Day.

The dates are: Wednesday 29 October 1997, 12.30 - 5 pm **or** Thursday 6 November 1997 12.30 - 5 pm (lunch provided). To book a place contact Sheron Pusey, Locality Health Promotion Adviser, 725 3414.

Advocacy Research Project

During March through to June this year, KCW Health Authority surveyed a range of agencies which operate within Westminster about what advocacy services they offer local people.

The aims of the project were to identify the types of 'advocacy' within Westminster, what gaps there are, and the ways in which the Health Authority can work with other agencies to bridge these gaps and strengthen and support existing services.

Over thirty agencies responded to the questionnaire and the steering group wishes to invite those who responded, and other interested agencies, to a seminar to receive feedback on the key findings and to discuss how these can be used to support the development of advocacy services locally.

Date: 1:00 - 3:00 pm, Friday 31st October 1997 at KCW Health Authority, 50 Eastbourne Terrace, W2. Further details from Mike Silveira, 0171 725 3304.

Voluntary Action Westminster

Health and Social Care

Conference 1997

9:30 am - 1:30 pm, Friday October 24th 1997
at Emmanuel Church Hall, 389 Harrow Road, W9
(admission free)

The conference will feature Jane Belman (London Voluntary Service Council) on *Health and Social Care: new challenges and opportunities for the voluntary sector.* She will be outlining some of the new government policy initiatives in this area and their implications for voluntary organisations. Neil Orr (Voluntary Action Westminster) will provide an overview of major developments locally.

There will be an opportunity to discuss KCW Health Authority and WCC Social Services' consultation paper setting out their priorities for next year. All this and a delicious buffet lunch from Birthday Bakers!

If you want to come and you haven't booked your place yet, please phone Madlin Hewitt or Neil Orr immediately (0171 724 1143).

Westminster Health and Social Care

Westminster Health and Social Care is published monthly by Voluntary Action Westminster, 37 Chapel Street, London NW1 5DP (tel. 0171 724 1143, fax 0171 723 8929). It is edited by Neil Orr (Health and Social Care Worker) and Catherine Flynn (User Involvement Project Worker) with support from Madlin Hewitt (Administrator). We welcome contributions. The deadline for material to be included in the next issue is November 7th.

Westminster Health and Social Care
Voluntary Action Westminster November 1997

Health Promotion and the Voluntary Sector

Health promotion is probably the area of health care where voluntary organisations can make the most positive contribution. Most are not in a position to provide clinical treatments to cure disease, but they can and do play an essential role in preventing people from becoming ill in the first place.

The importance of voluntary organisations is emphasised in the draft Health Promotion Strategy for Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster. The Strategy has been developed by KCW HA's Department of Health Promotion and Professional Advice, and is currently being consulted on.

What is health promotion?

The Strategy defines health promotion as "a process of enabling people to take control over and to improve their own health". It comprises elements including:

- primary prevention - aiming to work with healthy people to prevent ill-health arising in the first place;
- secondary prevention - seeking to shorten episodes of illness and prevent the progression of ill-health;
- tertiary prevention - seeking to limit disability or complications arising from an irreversible condition.

The Department aims to maximise the health of local people through working with other organisations to support them in promoting health. This support includes providing advice, training and resources.

Priorities in Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster

The key health promotion priorities in Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster have been proposed as: mental health; cardio-vascular disease; cancers; sexual health; accidents; substance misuse; the environment; inequalities; and homelessness.

The first five of these were identified as key areas in the government's Health of the Nation strategy in 1991. The new government has signalled that this is to be superseded by "Our Healthier Nation", with the main shift being a greater recognition of the impact of poverty, poor housing and other social factors upon people's health.

The role of the voluntary sector

Through their contact with local communities, voluntary organisations are in an ideal position to deliver health promotion messages. They can provide education through speakers, discussions, videos, posters, leaflets and so on.

However, their role goes beyond distributing resources. Community development is also central to health promotion, enabling communities to come together and influence the behavioural, environmental and social factors that affect their health.

In addition many of the core activities of voluntary organisations have an impact on people's health. For instance services for older people can play a preventative role by promoting social functioning and physical activity.

In recognition of this the Health Promotion Strategy proposes "To re-direct resources to increase the proportion of activity with non-NHS organisations, especially voluntary, community, and independent organisations and schools" and to involve voluntary organisations in developing a "collaborative approach to promoting health".

The Health Promotion Strategy is being developed by Siobhan Clarke, Head of Health Promotion and Professional Advice at KCW Health Authority (0171 725 3220).

Young Carers Research Project

The young carers research project at Westminster Carers Service is now seeking referrals. The project is in its fifth month, having been funded from joint finance for 18 months in order to address the needs of young carers in Westminster.

The aims of the project are to identify this hidden group of young people and provide an account of their responsibilities and their needs. The study will aim to explore ways of accessing resources and developing services for this group. Whilst conducting the research, Westminster Carers Service is offering support to young carers through its domiciliary respite care service.

The project is currently collecting information on the numbers and the characteristics of young carers in the borough. From this group, a sample will then be drawn and contacted for further in-depth interviews.

Voluntary and statutory organisations can refer any young person resident in Westminster they perceive to be in a caring role. That is a child or young person (under 18) who is carrying out significant caring tasks and assuming a level of responsibility for another person that would usually be taken by an adult.

Any referral made will be confidential and can be anonymised, and no young person will be contacted without the referee's consent.

For further information or to make a referral, please contact Natasha Munoz (researcher) at Westminster Carers Service, 3rd floor Monmouth house, 9 Monmouth Road, W2 4UT (0171 243 2500).

NHS Continuing Care for Older People

Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority has been reviewing facilities for the long term care of physically frail older people and those who have a mental illness. It has agreed that the buildings which currently house continuing care services for the north of KCW should be replaced with purpose built accommodation. The existing facilities at St Charles Hospital, Princess Louise Hospital and Athlone House were not designed for the continuing care of older people and many of them are in need of major rebuilding. Comments are invited on the following set of principles, on which new services are to be based.

Principles of reprovision

- If an older person has to give up their own home and move into NHS funded or non NHS funded residential care, that new home should be their home for life;

- When an older person moves into NHS continuing care they retain their rights, privacy and dignity, independence and choice;

- Continuing residential care should be provided in a homely and domestic environment; older people should have their own rooms and should have access to other communal indoor and outside space where meaningful activities can take place;

- Every older person will have a plan that sets out their particular care requirements. This will be agreed with the older persons family/friends;

- We believe that 90% of the bedrooms should be for single occupancy but if an older person wishes to share a room this choice should be open to them;

- Family and friends should be supported and able to have the greatest possible access;

- There should be access to the skills of appropriate specialists and this means that services for physically frail people and for people with a mental illness should be located where possible on the same site;

- The full range of primary, community and acute health services should be available to older people in residential care in the same way as if they had remained in their own homes;

- Some NHS places will be reprovided in the same setting as non NHS accommodation to enable older people to remain in a familiar setting even if they become more dependent on nursing care;

- People of all ages from the local community will be encouraged to visit the homes to break down the feelings of isolation that may occur amongst older people. It has been suggested that a coffee bar/café should form part of the accommodation.

If you have any comments on these principles (by December 12th please), or would like full copies of the papers, please contact Geoff Shepherd, Associate Director, KCW Health Authority, 0171 725 3287. Geoff would be happy to discuss the proposals further with voluntary organisations.

Asian Quitline

Asian people who want free, friendly help and advice on how to quit smoking can now ring a freephone number and speak to a counsellor in Bengali, Gujerati, Hindi, Punjabi or Urdu. The service is being provided as a joint venture between QUIT, the anti-smoking charity, and the British Heart Foundation.

Bengali/Sylheti	Mon., 1-9 pm	0800 002244
Gujerati	Tues., 1-9 pm	0800 002255
Hindi	Wed., 1-9 pm	0800 002266
Punjabi	Thurs., 1-9 pm	0800 002277
Urdu	Sun., 1-9 pm	0800 002288

The need for the service is paramount in view of the high rates of smoking amongst some minority groups. For instance, 40% of Bangladeshi men smoke regularly compared to the national average of 28%.

For more information contact Marc Thompson at KCW Health Promotion (0171 725 3421).

Bryanston & Baker Street

Do you live or work in the Bryanston and Baker Street wards of Westminster? This is the area bounded by Oxford Street in the South, Marylebone Road in the North, Edgware Road in the West and Marylebone High Street/Thayer Street/St James Street in the East.

KCW Health Authority, in partnership with Voluntary Action Westminster, is developing a "local voices" project in this area. The aim is to make contact with a wide variety of local residents to obtain their views on health services, and to develop better links between the Health Authority and local communities.

A meeting for workers and volunteers in voluntary and community organisations based in the wards has been arranged for Tuesday 25 November 1997. It will take place from 12:30 pm to 2:30 pm at Voluntary Action Westminster, 37 Chapel Street, NW1.

We will also be arranging to meet with residents associations and other local groups in the near future.

For further details please contact Neil Orr or Catherine Flynn at Voluntary Action Westminster (0171 724 1143) or Katherine Woolley at KCW Health Authority (0171 725 3329).

Keeping warm, keeping well

Dropping temperatures fill many elderly and disabled people with anxiety about how they will survive the winter. Timely local and national initiatives provide advice and practical help to beat the big chill.

• NEA, the national energy efficiency charity is organising a series of seminars in England and Wales entitled *Partnerships for Warmth*, for voluntary sector organisations, local authorities and housing agencies.

With the aim of developing local partnerships and networks to tackle the heating and insulation problems of people on low incomes, the roadshows will provide information on grant aid schemes for home insulation, the role of the voluntary sector in achieving targets set by local authorities on energy efficiency in housing, and the changing structure of the energy supply industry. The London roadshow will take place on 26 November from 10.30 am to 1.30 pm. To reserve a place, contact Maria Wardrobe, Public Relations Officer at NEA headquarters in Newcastle upon Tyne on 0191 261 5677.

• Westminster City Council is sponsoring a project to provide its residents with free expert advice on cutting energy bills and running a more energy-efficient home. The project is running for a trial period in the Harrow Road and St. George's wards. Details are available from Global Action Plan, FREEPOST, Lon5465, London.

• Low energy lamps use about one fifth of the electricity used by a normal light bulb whilst giving out the same amount of light. Elderly and disabled London Electricity customers can receive two free low energy lamps worth £11.99 each when they register on Freephone 0800 269 450.

Westminster Senior Citizens' Forum

Westminster Senior Citizens' Forum's Christmas Social takes place on Wednesday 10 December from 2-4pm at St Mark's Church, Old Marylebone Road, NW1. Speakers from Age Concern England and Global Action Plan will be offering tips on how to beat the cold, conserve energy and save money this winter. Free festive refreshments will be available. All pensioners are welcome. For further information, contact Catherine Flynn at VAW on 0171 724 1143 or Peter Russell on 0171 286 1486.

Events

VAW Health and Social Care Conference

Voluntary Action Westminster held a successful conference for local voluntary organisations on October 24th. The conference at the Emmanuel Church Hall in Harrow Road considered the changing health and social care environment in which voluntary organisations work, as well as discussing local services.

Jane Belman from London Voluntary Service Council provided an overview of new government initiatives, including proposed changes to the NHS internal market and the application of 'best value' to local authority services. Neil Orr from VAW considered major developments locally, and there was useful discussion in small groups of issues including mental health, services for older people and homelessness.

A full report of the conference will be available by the end of November. If you would like to receive a copy please contact Madlin Hewitt on 0171 724 1143.

Westminster Community Care Fair

Westminster Community Care Fair, coordinated by Westminster Social Services and KCW Health Authority, took place on 4th November at Marylebone Council House. This year there were two parts to the event - stalls from a range of local agencies (including Voluntary Action Westminster) and a public meeting with a panel made up Julie Jones (Director, Westminster Social Services), Cllr. Alex Segal (Chair, Westminster Social Services), Sir Thomas Boyd-Carpenter (Chair, KCW Health Authority) and John H James (Chief Executive, KCW Health Authority).

This year's public meeting was the largest to date, with up to 170 people attending. A meeting of this kind may not be suitable for substantial discussion of community care issues, and many of the questions reflected individuals' personal concerns. Nevertheless there clearly continues to be demand for such an event, with members of the public welcoming the opportunity to speak directly to the people ultimately responsible for health and social care in Westminster.

A summary of issues raised at the public meeting will be collated by Westminster Social Services Planning and Review Unit (0171 641 2425).

Disability day centre open

Stag House, Westminster's new resource centre for disabled people, opens its doors officially on 3 December with a celebration of International Day of Disabled People. Visitors to the fully accessible, state of the art building in Westbourne Park Road will be able to pick up a copy of Westminster's new Corporate Disability Policy which is being launched as part of the celebration, and to hear how they can get involved in monitoring the policy's effectiveness. The day kicks off at 2.30pm, with workshops and other activities continuing into the early evening.

Details: Rubina Hassanali (WCC Disability Policy Officer), 0171 641 2948.

Counselling

Cathedral Missions Pastoral Foundation is a Westminster-based Christian counselling charity. It works with other bodies to review counselling standards, raise awareness of counselling and promote training for counsellors.

Counselling training courses are provided on three levels - Introductory, Intermediate and Advanced. Courses in communication and listening skills are also run for those wishing to generally communicate better within the family, workplace or community. Stress management skills and relaxation therapy are available as coursesand on a one to one basis.

The charity also provides facilities for counsellors with a similar ethos, with rooms available in Hammersmith. CMPF would like to hear from those interested in training and other counselling bodies concerned about standards. Referrals for one to one counselling can be taken.

Contact: Cathedral Missions Pastoral Foundation, 2 Kinnerton Place, South Kinnerton Street, SW1X 8EH (0171 259 6818).

Westminster Health and Social Care

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Westminster Health and Social Care

Voluntary Action Westminster — January 1998

Mental health after the Paterson Centre

Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority is currently consulting on the future of adult mental health services in north Westminster and north Kensington. The main proposals are to close the Paterson Centre in Paddington and to develop a range of new facilities elsewhere.

The Paterson Centre is currently the main mental health unit for the north of KCW. It is managed by North West London Mental Health Trust, and is situated next to St Mary's Hospital.

The Paterson has been unpopular with many service users, relatives and staff for some time. Users have little space of their own and limited privacy, and restricted access to outside space. There is limited scope to make significant improvements on the current site.

An opportunity has arisen with the major developments planned around Paddington in the next few years, starting with the opening of an express rail link to Heathrow airport later this year. The pressure on land will make it possible for the NHS to sell the Paterson site. Rather than simply relocate the Paterson elsewhere it is proposed to invest the proceeds in a range of more suitable facilities.

There will still be a need for hospital places in the north of KCW, and it is proposed to modernise and expand facilities at St Charles Hospital, Exmoor Street, W10, to meet this need. The number of places in the Mental Health Unit at St Charles will be increased from 50 to 94. Users will be provided with space of their own as well as access to shared space and to the outside.

However some of the people in the Paterson could be cared for more appropriately in a non-hospital setting. At present there is no long-term NHS accommodation with clinical support in north KCW. It is proposed to redevelop the old Paddington Community Hospital site in Woodfield Road, W9 to provide 22 places for people who need long term care and rehabilitation in the community.

If the plans are agreed, a new day hospital would also be built on the same site, providing the support to prevent people going into hospital. The Community Mental Health Teams based at 209 Harrow Road would move to Woodfield Road too, giving them the space to provide a broader range of services in the community.

The need for change is certainly recognised by local voluntary organisations and service users. At Voluntary Action Westminster's Health and Social Care Conference in October 1997 it was stated that "the quality of the Paterson Centre seems to be worse than ever". However it remains to be seen whether the proposed changes will meet some of the other needs identified at the conference, such as for more culturally-appropriate day services, crisis beds as an alternative to hospital and user-led services.

The consultation period on the proposals continues until the end of March 1998. If you would like a copy of the consultation paper on the proposals, contact Jackie Reynolds (0171 725 3217). Comments on the proposals should be sent to Paul Mason, KCW Health Authority, 50 Eastbourne Terrace, W2 6LX.

Public meetings

If you want to express your views on the proposals directly to the Health Authority there will be an opportunity to do so at two public meetings next month. The meetings will take place on 11 February 1998 and 18 February 1998 at 6:30 pm. Both meetings will be held at Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority, 50 Eastbourne Terrace, W2 6LX.

Corporate Disability Policy

Westminster City Council officially launched its Corporate Disability Policy in December 1997. The Policy includes commitments, backed up by Action Plans, to:

• improve access to information and communication: providing a range of opportunities and choices to disabled people through accessible information;
• improve access to services: working in partnership with disabled people to design services which meet their needs and promoting their involvement in decision-making; and
• make the City an accessible place to visit, live and work in: improving access to the City for disabled people and encouraging others to do the same.

If you would like a copy of the Policy, please contact Gloria Davis (0171 641 2516).

Communicating with Disabled People

• As part of its implementation of the Disability Policy, the Council is producing a Good Practice Guide on Communicating with Disabled People, aimed primarily at council officers and Councillors. The guide will include practical advice on the communication needs of different groups of disabled people, including partially sighted people, hearing impaired people, deafblind people and people with learning disabilities. It will also include a list of British Sign Language Interpreters available to work locally. For further information, please contact Rubina Hassanali, Disability Policy Officer, 0171 641 2948.

• A Handy Reference Guide on Producing Information for Blind and Partially Sighted People is available from KCW Health Authority. The Guide, which comes in a poster format, comes with a list of useful contact numbers and addresses. For a copy, please contact Sue Thomas on 0171 725 3308.

Relatives Association

The Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster Relatives Association Group is for relatives and friends of older people living in residential and nursing homes locally, whether in the public, independent or voluntary sectors. The Group holds regular meeting with guest speakers. Forthcoming events include:

Wednesday February 11th, 2 pm - 4pm - Legal issues, including enduring power of attorney - with Jane Katyar, a solicitor with the Westminster firm Howard Kennedy.

Wednesday March 18th, 2 pm - 4 pm - Relatives - getting your message across - Louise Marsh, a care manager in Kensington & Chelsea, will discuss ways of communicating effectively with care providers.

Both these events will take place at Joan Bartlett House, Beatrice Place, Marloes Road, W8. For further details contact Valerie Moeri (0171 937 5464) or Carers Network Westminster (0171 932 0045).

Mobile Wardens

Westminster City Council now has an out of hours service to respond to people suffering with dementia in emergency situations.

The mobile Wardens can respond to calls for assistance from hospitals, police, members of the public, etc. when dementia sufferers are found wandering in public places or are in a distressed state in their own homes.

Wardens are able to accompany people home and help make them comfortable, as well as contacting other agencies and next of kin.

The service operates between 6.00 pm and 11.00 pm Monday to Friday, and 8.00 am - 6.00 pm Saturdays and Sundays.

To contact the Wardens, please telephone 0171 286 7412 during the above hours.

For further information, please contact Jackie Goodwin, Warden Manager, Emergency Link Office, 261 Harrow Road, W2 (0171 266 7412).

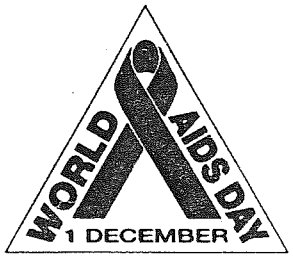
World AIDS Day 1997

December 1st 1997 was the tenth annual World AIDS Day, a time to remember the lives of people who have died of AIDS, to celebrate the lives of people living with HIV today, and to promote awareness of HIV. World AIDS Day was marked by a number of events across the City of Westminster.

• A thousand people took part in the National AIDS Trust's 'Celebration of Life' at St James Church, Piccadilly. The event featured a candlelight procession and vigil, and was attended by the Health Secretary, Frank Dobson (details: National AIDS Trust, 0171 814 6726);

• Staff from Parkside Health ran World AIDS Day stalls at Church Street Market and Marylebone Station, with support from other organisations including Voluntary Action Westminster. Red ribbons and leaflets were given out to more than 500 people (details: Oma Ramroop, Lisson Grove Health Centre, 0171 724 2391);

• KCW Health Authority ran a seminar for GPs on current developments in HIV;



• The Uganda Youth Support Group organised a successful event on 13 December 1997 with Westminster Race Equality Council and the Yaa Asantewaa Arts Centre. Almost 100 people attended for a day of music, food and talks on HIV. Details from Eddy Aroda, Uganda Youth Support (0171 328 1781);

• Shops in the West End raised money for AIDS charities. At Virgin Megastore in Oxford Street, TV celebrities helped raise £30,000 for the Terrence Higgins Trust. Selfridges and Vidal Sassoon also raised money for the THT;

• The artist Peter Blake awarded prizes at the World AIDS Day Art of Awareness Award Ceremony at the National Portrait Gallery (details from Karen Bollan, 0171 413 1889).

Help for Peabody Tenants living with HIV

Do you work with clients who are living with HIV or AIDS?
Are they a Peabody tenant?
Do they live in the Westminster Area?

If you can answer yes to all three of these questions then your client could benefit from a new, confidential service run by the La Verna House Project, who are specialists in providing support to people with HIV and AIDS. Best of all, it's free.

People with HIV/AIDS sometimes find that managing their home and HIV is just too much to handle. This scheme, which is funded by the Housing Corporation, offers Peabody tenants both practical and emotional support just as long as they need it with things such as:

• help with benefit applications and bill payments;
• practical advice about resources in the area;
• someone who can lighten the load and help tenants live more independently.

La Verna Director, Maurice Price said: "This scheme is totally confidential and is not connected to the person's tenancy in any way. It allows people affected by HIV to receive support from specialist staff, in their own home at the times when they need it most".

For more information and a confidential chat about this free service, please call La Verna House on 0171 724 5840 and ask for Christine or Andrea.

Do you want a HIV Test?

Free and confidential HIV testing is available at a number of local centres, including:

• St Mary's Hospital Jefferiss Wing Centre for Sexual Health , Praed Street W2 (0171 725 6619);
• Victoria Clinic for Sexual Health, 6 Osbert Street, SW1 (0181 746 8066);
• Chelsea and Westminster Hospital John Hunter Clinic, 369 Fulham Road, SW10 9TH (0181 846 6171);
• Mortimer Market Centre, off Capper Street, WC1 (0171 530 3000).

Chelsea & Westminster Speakers Programme

Chelsea and Westminster NHS Trust is running a Speakers Programme in 1998. Speakers from Chelsea and Westminster Hospital will be available to talk to local community and church groups, day centres and clubs.

Topics covered in the past have included services for the elderly, maternity services, children's services and the hospital's Healing Arts Programme. If there is a particular health issue you would like to hear about, the hospital will try and arrange a relevant speaker.

If you would like to have a speaker, please contact the Public Relations Department, Chelsea and Westminster Healthcare NHS Trust, 1 Lower Ground Floor, 369 Fulham Road, SW10 9NH (0181 846 6829).

GRIP : New address

GRIP, the language and interpreting service provided by Parkside Health NHS Trust, has moved offices. Its new address is:

GRIP Language Services
St Charles Hospital
Courtfield House
Exmoor Street
W10 6DZ

tel. 0181 962 4532
fax. 0181 962 4535

GRIP provides interpreting and other language services for health services in Westminster. If you, or a client, need an interpreter for a visit to a doctor, health centre or hospital, you should ask the relevant health service to arrange an interpreter with GRIP. You can also contact GRIP directly.

Children's meeting

Voluntary organisations working with children and young people in Westminster are invited to attend a meeting with the Children's Services Forum on January 21st.

The Forum includes senior officers from social services, health and education (as well as voluntary sector representatives) and is responsible for the Westminster Children's Services Plan and more generally for helping plan services for children in Westminster.

The Children's Services Plan for Westminster includes a commitment from the Children's Services Forum to meet twice a year with the voluntary sector. The next meeting will take place from 10:30 -12:30, Wednesday January 21st 1998 at St Pauls Church Centre, Rossmore Road, NW1.

Agenda items will include:

- Grants and contracts: Westminster Social Services will be reviewing grant funding of voluntary organisations in the next year. In addition, it is planned to award contracts for children's residential services and family centres.

- The children's health strategy - Christine Reeves will be providing an update on Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority's work on children's health.

- Children's services planning: an opportunity for voluntary organisations to contribute our views on how the planning of children's services could be improved.

If you wish to attend, please contact Neil Orr at Voluntary Action Westminster (0171 724 1143).

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Westminster Health and Social Care

Voluntary Action Westminster — March 1998

The focus of the Government's new Green Paper *Our Healthier Nation - a Contract for Health* is on how to prevent ill health.

The main shift from the Health of the Nation strategy pursued by the previous Government is from an emphasis on individuals changing their lifestyles to a recognition of the social causes of ill health. As stated in the paper's foreword: "Poor people are ill more often and die sooner. To tackle these fundamental inequalities we must concentrate attention and resources on the areas most affected by air pollution, poverty, low wages, unemployment, poor housing, crime and disorder, which can make people ill in both body and mind".

Priorities

The Green Paper sets out four priority areas, with targets for each to be achieved by the year 2010:

- heart disease and stroke - to reduce the death rate from these cause in people under 65 by at least a further third;
- accidents -to reduce accidents by at least a fifth;
- cancer: to reduce the death rate from cancer among people under 65 by at least a further fifth;
- mental health - to reduce the death rate from suicide and undetermined injury by at least a further sixth.

Proposed settings for action include healthy schools, healthy workplaces and healthy neighbourhoods.

As with most current Government initiatives, there is a strong emphasis on partnership. The paper states that "Health authorities will have a key role in leading local alliances to develop Health Improvement Programmes, which will identify local needs and translate the national contract into local action". Council departments will also have to consider the health implications of their work, since in the context of health "Local Authorities will have a new duty to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area, working in partnership with local people, local business and local voluntary organisations".

The role of the voluntary sector

In keeping with the partnership approach, the Green Paper envisages a role for the voluntary sector, stressing that "the wealth of voluntary and community bodies brings direct experience and an innovative and flexible approach which can add real dynamism to local projects. Their ability to act as advocates for their members and clients can give them a powerful voice and important influence on local policy making".

While this recognition is welcome, voluntary organisations may feel that the Green Paper underestimates the contribution we make. Our role is not simply to act as advocates for our clients, but to provide services that can help prevent ill-health. For instance, local organisations such as Age Concern Westminster and the Dutch Pot Lunch Club have carried out various health promotion activities with older people, such as promoting diabetic screening, breast screening and accident prevention. Ongoing recreational activities for older people also make a positive contribution to health by promoting exercise and social functioning.

As part of developing voluntary sector responses to the consultation on Our Healthier Nation, Voluntary Action Westminster will be participating in a meeting convened by London Voluntary Sector Council with the report's author, Tessa Ing from the Department of Health.

If you would like a copies of LVSC's briefing papers on Our Healthier Nation and the Government's White Paper The new NHS, please phone Neil Orr at VAW (0171 724 1143). We will be covering the proposals for the future structure of the NHS in a future issue of the newsletter, once the local impact becomes clearer.

Joint Finance: new voluntary sector projects

A number of local voluntary organisations have been successful in securing KCW Health Authority joint finance funding for innovative new projects. Projects approved to start in 1998/99 include the following:

Paddington Arts received funding for a Multimedia Profiling Project working with people with learning disabilities and communication difficulties. Multimedia profiling involves working with individuals to produce audio-visual reports about their needs and wishes. Multimedia technology is used to process images, videoclips and sound only files recorded with the service user, enabling the user to communicate in an engaging and accessible way.

In developing the project Paddington Arts will be working closely with Acting Up, who have successfully developed a similar project in Hackney. For further details contact Nick Weldin, 0171 286 2722.

St Mungo's submitted a successful proposal for a Westminster Tenancy Support Worker to work with residents with mental health problems in additions to substance misuse. The issue of 'dual diagnosis' is receiving increasing attention. People in this category can fall between mental health agencies with a lack of expertise around drugs and alcohol, and substance misuse agencies without specialist mental health experience. The Tenancy Support Worker will provide support to help clients stabilise their mental health and substance misuse so that they can remain in their own home. Contact Paul Thomas, 0181 600 3033.

Look Ahead Housing Association will be developing support to single vulnerable people with mental health needs placed in bed and breakfast accommodation. The aim is to ensure that their mental health needs are stabilised in order for them to be successfully rehoused. Details from Douglas Waller, 0171 937 1166.

Hungerford Drug Project will be developing new services for young people (specifically adolescents and children) who are either at risk of problematic drug use, or who have already been identified as having a drug problem. Specific areas to be addressed will include young people in contact with the Criminal Justice System, young people looked after by the local authority, young people with learning difficulties and young people excluded from mainstream education. Contact Jean Pender, 0171 287 8743.

Camden Community Transport and **Kensington & Chelsea Community Transport** will be working together on a Westminster Community Transport Initiative. It is planned to set up a number of pilot services including providing vehicles for community group use, a vehicle sharing scheme within the voluntary sector, minibus driver training and services targeted at individuals with mobility needs, such as disabled people and older people. Contact Ruth Hayes at CCT, 0171 911 0959.

Carers Network Westminster had two projects approved, one to provide support to carers of older people, and one focusing on carers of people with mental health problems. Contact Gwyneth Williams, 0171 932 0800.

Westminster Pensioners Association will be setting up a new project to provide practical support to older people to enable them to remain in their own homes. A pool of trained and committed volunteers will be developed to carry out minor repairs, maintenance and painting and decorating. Contact Sara Pugh, 0171 289 1849.

Queens Park Family Service Unit will be establishing a Community and Family Health Project. The project will be developing a range of community-based initiatives that promote the health and well-being of residents in north Paddington. Details from Catherine Superville, 0181 960 3266.

Westminster Society for People with Learning Disabilities will be employing a Family Advisor to provide independent advice, information and emotional support for families caring for children with disabilities in Westminster. Contact Dr Roger Foggitt, 0181 968 7376.

Joint Review of Westminster Social Services: user and carer consultation

Since 1996 the Social Services Inspectorate and the Audit Commission have been engaged in a rolling programme of Reviews of Social Service authorities in England. This year it is Westminster's turn to be reviewed. The results of the Review are published nationally and attract considerable publicity.

The purpose of the Review is to give local people a clear and independent view of how well Westminster, as a social services authority:
- responds to individual people who need assistance;
- plans for its population as a whole; and
- uses its resources.

The Review Team will make a study of how the authority listens to users and carers, it will examine a sample of cases and it will analyse financial arrangements.

The Review Team will collect users' and carers' views through:
- a questionnaire to be sent out in June to 400 People;
- group meetings of users and carers in June;
- individual meetings with a selection of users and carers whose cases will be examined in depth in October.

They will be asked:
- what was it like to use the services?
- did they help?
- what improvements could be made to the quality and quantity of services?
- does the authority listen?

Those groups not consulted directly will be able to write directly to the Review Team.

The Review Team will report back in Feb 1999. Westminster will be required to plan how to meet any areas which do not meet the standards required.

For more information contact:

Philip Berechree, Joint Review Co-ordinator,
City of Westminster,
7th Floor, City Hall,
64 Victoria Street.
London SW1E 6QP
(0171 641 1958).

User Involvement Conference

An audit of user involvement work across London and the south-east has been carried out by the London Voluntary Service Council and VAW. A survey of all Councils for Voluntary Service in the region was followed by a conference on how to develop more effective ways of involving people who use health and social care services in local planning and management decisions.

Service planning: uneven development

Perhaps predictably, user involvement initiatives appear to have developed unevenly across care groups and communities of interest at the level of service planning: disability organisations have a history of involving themselves, even without an invitation, while people from black and minority ethnic communities and homeless people do not tend to feature without 'special projects' designed to draw them in. However, differences between boroughs seem to be even greater: unhappily for users, where you live seems to be a major factor in determining how far your views on services are invited.

Discussions on service planning concluded that while policies, strategies and frameworks on involving users could be useful tools, these needed to be supported by periodic implementation plans, together with monitoring and review arrangements, if they were to have any impact.

Making involvement accessible

A clear lesson from the conference is that user participation is enhanced by the provision of practical support, such as transport, child care, interpreters and pre-meetings. The ability of users to make informed choices depends on accessible information, yet there is little evidence of planners taking this on board in a systematic way.

Examples of best practice, barriers to involvement and recommendations for the future will be written up in a report of the conference, which will shortly be produced by LVSC. It is planned to hold a local seminar to launch the report and discuss its implications for Westminster.

For further information, or for a copy of the conference report, contact Catherine Flynn on 0171 724 1143.

New Deal for People with a Disability

The Department for Education and Employment and the Department of Social Security are inviting bids for innovative schemes with the aims of:

- helping people with a disability or long-term illness into work and enabling them to remain in work;
- helping carers to balance any responsibilities with work, or to take up work when their caring responsibilities end.

The programme is targeted on people currently receiving benefits including incapacity benefit, income support with a disability premium, severe disablement allowance and invalid carers allowance. Services provided by schemes could include improved advice; assessment and placement; rehabilitation; work trials; skills training; and so on.

£5 million has been allocated to fund up to 20 innovative schemes nationally. Schemes will be expected to last for a year and to have a minimum number of 50 to 100 participants. The key outcome will be the number of people securing and keeping a job, rather than simply being prepared for work.

Local voluntary organisations might find it difficult to develop a proposal on their own that would meet these criteria, but both Westminster City Council and the local Employment Service are keen to develop partnership proposals. It might, for instance, be possible for voluntary organisations to deliver a component of the scheme to a smaller group of people.

For a copy of the bidding guidance contact Robert Holttum at the DSS (0171 712 2489). The deadline for bids is 3 July 1998, with a decision in early Autumn. If you want more information on local possibilities, please contact Kay Buxton at Westminster City Council (0171 641 2418) or Neil Orr at VAW (0171 724 1143).

Lisson Green Seminar

A seminar on health and regeneration in Lisson Green will be taking place from 2:00 - 4:15 pm on Monday 6th April 1998 at Lisson Grove Health Centre. The seminar will provide an opportunity for local community groups and health and social care professionals to have an overview of regeneration on Lisson Green Estate, and explore ways of putting health on the agenda.

For more information please contact: Pearl Darell, Department of Health Promotion, KCW Health Authority (0171 725 3437).

WREC Health and Social Care Project

Westminster Race Equality Council have appointed Marium Nafisa as their new Health and Social Care Officer. Marium has experience of working in the NHS and voluntary sector in the UK, Bangladesh and Sweden. She will be helping to set up a range of projects, including work on the needs of older black people in Westminster and on mental health in black and minority ethnic communities.

Further information from Marium Nafisa at WREC, 0171 287 1157.

Facing up to Difference

KCW Health Authority have developed a draft Strategy for Commissioning Health Services for People from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities. Facing up to Difference covers issues including needs assessment, access to health care and appropriateness of services.

If you would like a copy of the draft, which is currently being circulated for consultation, contact Katherine Woolley at KCW (tel. 725 3329)

NHS Continuing Care

KCW Health Authority have issues a consultation document on the proposed changes to continuing and respite care services for older people in the north of KCW. It describes proposals for providing new and modernised facilities and closing down Athlone House in Highgate. Public meetings have been arranged to discuss the proposals including one on Wednesday 15 April, 6:30 pm at KCW HA, 50 Eastbourne Terrace, W2 6LX.

Details: Katherine Woolley, KCW Health Authority, 0171 725 3329.

Westminster Health and Social Care

Westminster Health and Social Care is published by Voluntary Action Westminster, 37 Chapel Street, London NW1 5DP (tel. 0171 724 1143, fax 0171 723 8929). It is edited by Neil Orr (Health and Social Care Worker) and Catherine Flynn (User Involvement Project Worker) with support from Madlin Hewitt (Administrator). We welcome contributions. The deadline for material to be included in the next issue is April 15th.

Westminster Health and Social Care

Voluntary Action Westminster — April 1998

Lights out at the Lighthouse!

There was a particularly lively meeting of KCW Health Authority on 8 April 1998, as the future of London Lighthouse hung in the balance. Members of the Save London Lighthouse Campaign leafleted the meeting, and service users gave impassioned speeches. Faced with a loss of £1.7 million of health service funding in 1998/99, the Lighthouse's Council of Management have decided to close its residential services from September 1998 and sell its building in Ladbroke Grove.

After years of being seen as something of a Fairy Godmother due to its role as a major HIV funder, KCW now finds itself in the uncomfortable position of being cast in some quarters as the Wicked Witch of the West now that the funding situation is changing. Other press reports, most notably in the Express on Sunday, have heaped the blame on the Lighthouse's own management.

In actual fact, KCW is only responsible for a £240,000 reduction in funding, with the remainder of the £1.7 million cut being made by other NHS purchasers, most of them in London. The Lighthouse's management meanwhile have had to struggle with a rapidly changing situation.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of particular decisions along the way, the Lighthouse is only the most spectacular example of trends in the HIV field that are independent of either the Health Authority or the Lighthouse and that amount to a major sea change in services for people living with HIV and AIDS.

First the good news...

The impact of combination therapy and other new drug treatments has dramatically reduced the demand for hospital inpatient care and residential services. People with HIV seem to be living longer and healthier lives. Of course the 'AIDS industry' is not a job creation scheme, and it would be a major step forward if HIV services were no longer needed and organisations like the Lighthouse and the Terrence Higgins Trust could be wound down.

However, not everybody with HIV will benefit from these treatments and there are early indications from America that the benefits of combination therapy may begin to decline after two or three years. The future situation is uncertain, and this would seem to support taking a cautious approach to service changes until the picture becomes clearer.

The main barrier to maintaining present service levels is the pressure placed on health authority budgets by the cost of combination therapy itself. The HIV drugs budget in London has increased from £14 million in 1995-96 to £38 million in 1997-98. Central Government have not provided sufficient funds to meet the full costs of this increase, forcing funders to seek ways of making savings elsewhere.

From high quality to equality?

As a HIV worker in the early 1990s, people would sometimes ask me how I could justify the provision of services to people with HIV which were not available to those with other chronic or life threatening conditions. While this was sometimes exaggerated, it is true that for many people with HIV the quality of care was relatively high with a range of innovative services, many of them pioneered in the voluntary sector. London Lighthouse has been the flagship example, providing hospice and respite care, counselling, complementary therapies, welfare rights advice and a range of other services, all in an attractive setting with a café and garden.

The hope was that some of the holistic models of care developed would benefit others, and that there would be a 'levelling up' of standards for all NHS users to those applying in the HIV field. To do so would ☞

require a massive new investment in health services, and in the absence of this it was perhaps inevitable that pressure would grow for a levelling in the opposite direction. This was signalled in the Inner London's HIV Health Commissioners' Group's Framework for the Purchasing of HIV/AIDS and GUM Services for 1998/99 which aimed to move NHS funded services for people with HIV/AIDS more into line with mainstream NHS service provision.

While NHS purchasers would argue that the quality of NHS-funded services will be maintained, nobody is disguising the fact that there will be less of them.

Voluntary but not friendly

The experience of London Lighthouse illustrates some of the difficulties voluntary organisations can face in becoming major service providers on behalf of statutory funders. Dependence on such funders can create major problems when funding is withdrawn, perhaps threatening the viability of the organisation as a whole and the other non-statutory services it provides.

Organisations operating at this level can also find themselves in an increasingly competitive market to the detriment of the cooperation between organisations which service users might expect. HIV voluntary organisations now find themselves competing for a declining number of contracts, and any solidarity between organisations has been severely undermined. Lighthouse's difficulties have not been helped by the hostile comments in the national press of another HIV voluntary organisation which has recently competed with the Lighthouse for a major contract.

A sacred space

Although the Lighthouse, with the support of KCW, hope to continue to provide non-residential services at another site, it is clear that there is a great emotional investment in the Lancaster Road building itself. At the meeting one service user described it as a "sacred space". For instance, the garden serves as a site of remembrance where the ashes of 700 people who have died from AIDS have been scattered.

It is to be hoped that whatever the future of HIV services on site, an appropriate use can be found for the building which has benefited from millions of pounds of public and charitable money, and the efforts of countless users, workers and volunteers.

Neil Orr, Health and Social Care Worker

Public Health Report: Inequality in Health

The new public health report from KCW Health Authority takes as its theme "inequality in health and the links between poor health and social poverty". The report includes a wealth of information about the health of the local population. It clearly demonstrates that the distribution of illness and death varies across KCW, with "a striking similarity" between "wards with the highest levels of deprivation" and those with "the highest death rates from all causes, heart disease and lung cancer".

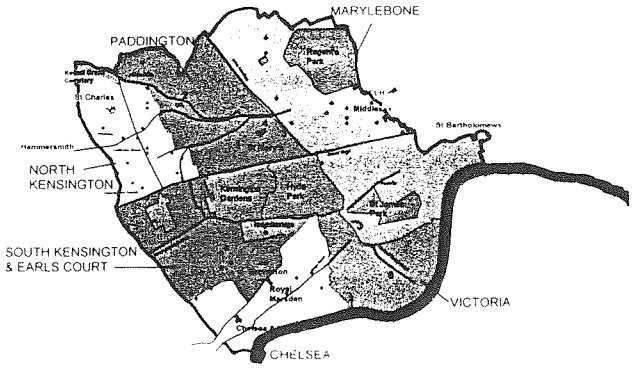
Within Westminster the death rate from all causes is three times higher in Queens Park and Harrow Road than in Knightsbridge and Belgravia. Deaths from heart disease and lung cancer are also disproportionately focused on the north west and south east of KCW.

Using the example of cardiovascular disease, the report examines how age, gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status affect an individual's health.

Housing and the environment also impact on people's health. Private housing stock in Westminster has been demonstrated to be in worse condition than the national average. The report notes that "ill health may arise directly from living in badly designed, poorly built houses or flats. For example, damp housing and mould growth may lead to asthma". The relatively poor air quality often present in KCW can also affect the health of the affluent and deprived alike.

The report identifies positive examples of working with communities to tackle inequalities, stressing the need for "joint working involving community groups, schools, primary care teams, workplaces and voluntary groups".

The report is available free of charge from: Nicola Bourne, KCW Department of Public Health, 50 Eastbourne Terrace, London W2 6LX. Tel. 0171 725 3217.



Framework for voluntary sector involvement

In response to a recommendation from Voluntary Action Westminster, the Joint Consultative Committee agreed to develop a **Framework for involving the voluntary sector in joint planning in Westminster**. A draft framework has now been produced by VAW, KCW Health Authority and Westminster Social Services and is currently being circulated for consultation. The document sets out the aims of involving the voluntary sector in joint planning, the principles underpinning it and the mechanisms for promoting it.

If you would like a copy of the draft please contact Neil Orr on 0171 724 1143.

KCW Continuing Health Care Policy and Criteria

KCW Health Authority have issued revised eligibility criteria for admission to and the provision of services for patients requiring continuing care. As before, the document includes criteria for older people (both physically frail and mentally ill), adults requiring care as a result of illness or accident (physical disability) and palliative care (care of the dying).

In addition, the 1998-2000 document also includes for the first time eligibility criteria for adults requiring continuing care as a result of a learning disability and for children with continuing care needs.

For further information, please contact Jubin Mama, KCW Health Authority, 0171 725 3318.

Continuing Care Consultation

Last month we reported that KCW Health Authority had issued a consultation document on changes to the provision of long-term NHS-funded care for older people. The consultation period runs to the end of May, and KCW Community Health Council intends to respond on behalf of the local community. If you would like to contribute your views, the CHC encourages you to attend the forthcoming public meetings organised by the Health Authority: 23 April, 7pm, St. John's & St. Elizabeth's, St. John's Wood; 29 April, 4pm, Princess Louise Hospital, St Quentin Ave, W10; 5 May, evening, Athlone House.

Details: Dan Jakob KCW Community Health Council, 0171 706 7100.

Maternity Services for Women with Learning Difficulties

As part of the government-sponsored 'Changing Childbirth' initiative, the Maternity Alliance is investigating how maternity services provide support for parents who have learning difficulties. The Project Officer is keen to speak to parents or prospective parents with learning difficulties, user groups and professionals such as midwives, health visitors, community nurses and social workers.

If you have information, views or expertise in this area, please contact Deborah Quartermaine, Project Officer on 0171 588 8583.

Dementia Development Worker: new phone & fax

From Monday April 20th, Jude Sweeting has a new telephone no. - 0171 641 7431, and a new fax no. - 0171 641 7453. She remains at: c/o Care Management Team, 2nd Floor, 4 Frampton Street, London NW8 8LF.

Community Care Charges

Charging for Care, a study of the impact on service users of the means-tested charges for community care introduced in Southwark in April 1997, has been published by the Southwark Community Care Forum. The report also evaluates SSD charging policies across England and Wales, and includes comparative studies of three other local authorities.

The report is available at £5 to voluntary sector organisations, incl p&p from SCCF, 1 Grosvenor Terrace, London SE5 0NR.

User Involvement in Staff Recruitment

Does your organisation involve service users or carers in staff recruitment? Are they there as advisors or as decision-makers? Is there a separate user/carer panel or do users and carers sit on the main panel? Voluntary Action Westminster is organising a local seminar on this subject, and would like to hear from you.

Please contact Catherine Flynn on 0171 724 1143.

National User Conference

The National Institute for Social Work's 'Shaping Our Lives' and 'Margin to Mainstream' projects have organised a one day user-run event for 21st May. The conference will be held in central London, and is free to all service users. Paul Boateng, Minister responsible for Social Services, will be speaking and answering questions in the morning. Subjects for discussion at afternoon workshops include setting up direct payments, influencing charging policy, influencing trainers, user managed services, benefits and users involved in assessments. A few places are still left.

For an application form, to be returned by 8th May, contact Fung-yee Lee or Martin Heidensohn at NISW, 0171 387 9681.

Relatives Association Summer Meetings

Relatives, friends and carers of older people are invited to attend forthcoming group meetings of the Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster branch of the Relatives Association:

- Wednesday May 13th, 6-8pm, 'Sight and Sound Difficulties - how you CAN help' - speakers are specialists in visual and hearing loss;
- Wednesday June 17th, 6-8pm, 'Residential Homes Inspectors - what they do and what they can do'

Both meetings will be held at Thamesbrook, Dovehouse Street, SW3 6LA.

For further details, contact Valerie Moeri, 0171 937 5464 or Cynthia Heymanson, 0171 916 6055.

Pensioners and the London Referendum - Open Meeting

The Westminster Senior Citizens' Forum's spring open meeting is from 2-4pm on Monday 27th April at the Rosary Church Hall, Old Marylebone Road. A week ahead of the referendum, the subject will be the proposed London-wide Authority. Speakers for and against will outline their case and take questions from the floor.

Further details: Peter Russell, 0171 286 1486 / Catherine Flynn, 0171 724 1143.

Dutch Pot Health Promotion Events

Dutch Pot Lunch and Social Club is hosting health awareness and health promotion sessions for older people in April and May:

- April 14th: Breast Cancer
- April 21st: Prostate Cancer
- May 5th: Visual Impairment
- May 13th: Heart Disease

Sessions run from 2-3pm at Dutch Pot, Fernhead Road Methodist Church, Fernhead Road, W9.

Details: Cecilia Fashesin, Co-Ordinator, 0181 960 4357.

Sun Know-How Briefing Sessions

Sun Know-How is a national skin cancer awareness campaign developed by the Health Education Authority. From 1-8 June, the campaign aims to inform the public of preventive strategies to protect the skin from damage caused by the sun.

KCW Health Promotion Department is holding two briefing sessions for professionals, aiming to:

- Provide a clinical update on skin cancer;
- View Sun Know-How 1998 campaign materials and identify target groups;
- Share information and knowledge on planned Sun Know-How activities;
- Strengthen and broaden local support for the campaign.

The sessions will run from 9.30-1pm on Tuesday 5 May at the Royal Brompton Hospital and Thursday 7 May at Lisson Grove Health Centre.

Bookings/Campaign Pack: Pearl Darrell, 0171 725 3437, preferably by 24 April.

Westminster Health and Social Care

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Westminster Health and Social Care

Voluntary Action Westminster

May 1998

50 years after its foundation, the National Health Service is once again undergoing a period of organisational change. The internal market and individual GP fundholders are to be replaced by Primary Care Groups as the cornerstone of the new NHS. In Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster, as elsewhere, fairly frantic discussions are underway to get these up and running by the deadline of April 1999.

Primary Care Groups - coming your way

What are Primary Care Groups?

Primary Care Groups will bring together GPs and community nurses in each area to improve the health of local people (social services may be represented on the Board). Their responsibilities will include commissioning health services, developing primary care and improving public health. PCGs will develop over time through four levels, each with increased responsibilities:

- level one: support the Health Authority in commissioning care for its population, acting in an advisory capacity;
- level two: take devolved responsibility for managing the budget for healthcare in their area, while remaining part of the Health Authority;
- level three: become a freestanding body responsible for commissioning health care, accountable to, but separate from the Health Authority;
- level four: as in 3, but with added responsibility for providing community health services.

At levels three and four, PCGs will become Primary Care Trusts and could combine with or employ staff from community health care trusts (in Westminster, Parkside and Riverside).

What about the Health Authority?

Although their existing functions will be increasingly devolved to Primary Care Groups, Health Authorities will still have an important role. As well as convening and ratifying the existence of PCGs, Health Authorities will take the lead in developing local Health Improvement Programmes. HIPs will cover the health needs of the local population and the services required to meet these needs; voluntary organisations, local authorities and other stakeholders will all have an input into their development. Primary Care Groups and NHS Trusts will have to work within the local HIP framework.

What's happening locally?

The most pressing question is what Primary Care Groups will exist in KCW and what areas they will cover. The Health Authority has to submit recommendations on this to the NHS Executive Regional Office by the end of July. Trying to get to grips with the various options being put forward is not unlike understanding the break up of Yugoslavia.

An initial suggestion that there could be one PCG for Westminster and one for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea seems to be giving way to some kind of north/south split. Certainly in south Kensington & Chelsea, local GPs have "done a Croatia" and unilaterally organised themselves as a group. GPs in north Kensington and Paddington have followed suit and are holding elections for their own group. This could be the Bosnia of the situation, as there may be border disputes over whether all or part of Paddington should be in such a PCG, and whether it is appropriate for a PCG to cross local authority boundaries. Marylebone Locality could form the core of a third local PCG, possibly with some Paddington GPs or the former KCW Locality of Victoria. Alternatively Victoria could link up with South K&C.

The groups already set up by GPs are formally just working parties to discuss local configurations. Although some GPs might see them as proto-Primary Care Groups they have no official status as such. In any event, NHS Executive guidance requires that support for proposed PCGs should be sought from local authorities, the Health Authority, the public and other interested parties as well as GPs themselves.

Beyond a boundary

The most controversial aspect of the proposed configuration is the lack of co-terminosity with local authority boundaries, with at least one of the local PCGs including parts of both Westminster and RBKC.

PCGs are required to "embrace natural communities that make sense to the local populations". It is true that, as some GPs argue, there are similarities between the populations of north Westminster and north RBKC. Many people living in North Kensington are already registered with GPs in Paddington, and vice versa. In terms of delivering health care to patients this configuration seems to make sense. A similar case can be made for South K&C and Victoria.

In terms of the wider role of PCGs the position is not so straightforward. The NHS White Paper envisages close cooperation between PCGs and local authorities in promoting public health, and requires PCGs to "work more closely with social services on both planning and delivery". Working with two local authorities can be very complex, and the local authorities themselves may not favour such an arrangement.

Similarly PCGs will be expected to "build healthy alliances between GPs and the wider health community" including "voluntary bodies". Most local voluntary organisations work within local authority boundaries. A PCG covering parts of both Westminster and RBKC would need to work with two voluntary sectors, two Age Concerns, two carers support organisations, and so on.

Of course KCW Health Authority has been working across both local authorities for years, but to do so it has had to create parallel structures, with separate joint planning bodies and dedicated community liaison workers for both authorities. Cross-boundary PCGs may need to make a similar investment in structures and officer time to work effectively.

Public involvement

The guidance on PCGs stresses that they will have to "allow the public to participate in decisions on primary, community and hospital services", and detailed guidance on this will be issued during the summer.

Public involvement could be restricted to having one or two lay members on the board, but we would argue that to be meaningful it requires a much more inclusive, community-focused approach. PCGs would need to develop public involvement strategies for working with service users, community groups, voluntary organisations and the Community Health Council, with special attention to traditionally marginalised sectors of the public such as minority ethnic communities. A range of approaches could be tried including Citizens Juries, Focus Groups and Panels, but at least as important as structures is the adoption of an ethos of reaching out to the local community in all its diversity. For many GPs this will be a significant departure from their current way of working.

The way forward

A recent article on experience of locality commissioning elsewhere has warned of "the danger that PCGs based on general practices will be too bio-medical in approach to take on the new agenda of health improvement" and public involvement[1]. Voluntary Action Westminster intends to work with the Health Authority and emerging PCGs to help prevent this and to realize the potential Primary Care Groups offer for greater community involvement and meaningful partnerships with the voluntary sector.

[1] S. Christie and S. Blades, Toil and Trouble, Health Service Journal, 7 May 1998.

Voluntary Action Westminster is a member of KCW Health Authority's PCG Reference Group. If you have any comments you would like to feed into the process of establishing PCGs please contact Neil Orr or Catherine Flynn (0171 724 1143).

Voluntary Action Westminster Briefing meeting

The Voluntary Sector and the New National Health Service

10:00 am - 12:30 pm, Thursday 9 July 1998 (venue to be confirmed)

Are you up to speed on Primary Care Groups? Healthy Living Centres? Health Improvement Programmes? You need to be if your organisation is going to take advantage of the new opportunities emerging for the voluntary sector in the new NHS. This meeting will outline what's happening locally and will include a discussion on the Health Improvement Programme with Dr Sally Hargreaves, Director of Public Heath, KCW Health Authority. To book your place at the meeting, please call Neil Orr or Madlin Hewitt (0171 724 1143).

HIV news

Body Positive moves to Soho

HIV voluntary organisation Body Positive has moved into Westminster from Earl's Court. The new, expanded premises in Soho will enable BP to upgrade the range of services it provides for people living with HIV. These include:

- drop-in information service with library and internet lounge;
- welfare rights and benefits advice
- HIV treatments advice;
- courses for people recently diagnosed with HIV;
- purpose-built gym;
- complementary therapy suite;
- Positive Line (0800 616212) - a freephone helpline open Monday to Friday, 11-7, Saturday 12-5.

At a time when much of the HIV voluntary sector is contracting, Body Positive's continued development is very welcome.

Further details: Robert Fieldhouse (Information Officer), Body Positive, 14 Greek Street, W1V 5LE (0171 287 8020)

Uganda Youth Support Group

The Uganda Youth Support Group is now developing a home support scheme for African people affected by HIV/AIDS in Westminster. The scheme will:

- provide home support services, including assisting clients with shopping, buying and preparing African foods;
- provide respite care for parents who need help with picking up and dropping children at school;
- help people who have benefited from combination therapy to get back into active life in the community;
- encourage and assist people who are affected by HIV to access treatments and services;
- provide culturally sensitive HIV/AIDS services to the African Communities in Westminster.

Faith Ndirangu has been appointed as the home support worker. She has previously worked with London Lighthouse and has a wide experience of working with people affected by HIV/AIDS.

Further details: Faith Ndirangu, Uganda Youth Support Group, 11 Lonsdale Road, NW6 6RA (tel. 0171 328 1781, fax. 0171 328 1527).

Events

Chelsea & Westminster open day

Chelsea & Westminster Hospital are holding an Open Day on Saturday June 6th. Members of the public will be offered free health checks and the opportunity to pick up advice and information on a whole range of health issues and chat to hundreds of staff, including doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, dietitians and midwives. There will be a unique opportunity to look behind the scenes with tours of X Ray and Operating Theatres, as well as a programme of music and entertainment. Last year's event attracted around 2,000 visitors and a similarly lively afternoon is expected on June 6th. The Open Day runs from 11 am to 4 pm, with admission free.

Further details: Press Office, Chelsea & Westminster Hospital, 369 Fulham Road, SW10 9NH (0181 846 6717)

Community Development & Health

The Centre for Community Care and Public Health at the University of Westminster, with the Marylebone Health Centre, are organising two linked day workshops on Community Development and Health. The workshops will provide an introduction to community development and explore a strategic approach to developing work in the context of tackling health inequalities. They will take place on Tuesday 16 and Wednesday 24 June 1998 at the Kings Fund, W1. The cost for voluntary organisations is £55 for one day, or £90 for both days.

Further details from Kathryn Hill, tel. 0171 911 5000, ext.3629.

Diagnosis: Homophobic

PACE, the lesbian and gay counselling and mental health project, has published a new report. **Diagnosis: homophobic** examines the experiences of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals in mental health services The report is based on an 18 month qualitative research project funded by the Department of Health, and includes 33 recommendations for good practice.

The 130 page report costs £15 for organisations or £5 for individuals (plus £1.00 postage/packing) from PACE, 34 Hartham Road, N7 9JL (0171 7001323).

Children's news

Child Safety Week

Child Safety Week, an initiative of the Child Accident Prevention Trust, will take place between 22-28 June 1998. The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness about child accidents and highlight preventative measures around child safety. KCW Health Authority will be running a series of activities and displays. If you would like to participate in the campaign or would like more information about local events contact and from KCW Department of Health Promotion on 0171 725 3438. Campaign materials are available direct from Child Accident Prevention Trust on 0171 608 3828.

Integrated Nursery Settings

Westminster City Council is continuing to consult on proposals to develop new Integrated Nursery Settings. In the past day care services for children in need have largely been separate from nursery schools, an approach that has led to a disparate, often inappropriate range of provision for young children. The aim is to develop high quality nursery provision which combines day care and education. Westminster already has one integrated nursery setting - the Dorothy Gardner Centre in Queen's Park - and there are a range of proposals for developing others elsewhere in the City.

The consultation document is available from Philip Giorgi, Project Manager Integrated Nursery Provision, WCC Education & Leisure (0171 641 3398).

Children's voluntary sector meeting

Voluntary organisations working with children and young people in Westminster are invited to attend a meeting with the Children's Services Forum from 10:00 am -12:30 pm on Thursday July 16th 1998 at the Council House, Marylebone Road. The meeting will be attended by John Dennington (Westminster Social Services) and other senior officers from the City Council and the Health Authority.

Proposed agenda items include:

- school exclusions and behaviour support plans;
- refugees and asylum seekers;
- funding priorities 1998/99: grants and joint finance.

If you wish to attend, please contact Neil Orr or Madlin Hewitt at Voluntary Action Westminster (0171 724 1143).

Transport meeting for disabled people

Westminster Visually Impaired Persons' Group is extending an open invitation to *all* disabled people for its May meeting on the subject of transport. Michael Dwemoh from Westminster Council will be attending to talk about the Westminster Taxicard Scheme, the London Transport Freedom Pass (for buses and the tube), and plans for a new community transport scheme in Westminster. There will be time for questions, and application forms for Taxicards and Freedom Passes will also be available. The meeting starts at 7.30pm on 27th May at the RNIB, 224 Great Portland Street W1.

Westminster VIP is a self-help group, concerned with improving the quality of life and services available to people who are blind or partially sighted. New members are always welcome. For further information, contact Mr Tooman, Chairperson, on 0171 730 0991.

Advice Workers

The Advice Workers Forum provides a space where advice workers are able to receive and give support, and share information. Meetings are an ideal networking opportunity, and presentations are given by various groups to establish a clearer picture of the advice services available in Westminster. Due to shifts in posts and funding many of our core members have had to move on, so we are keen to involve new members who would like to contribute to the Forum.

We will have a presentation from Marylebone Bangladeshi Association and a discussion on the future of the Forum at the next meeting on **23rd June 1998 at 2.30pm at Voluntary Action Westminster**. If you would like minutes or to be added to our mailing list please contact Madlin Hewitt on 0171 724 1143.

Westminster Health and Social Care

Westminster Health and Social Care is published monthly by Voluntary Action Westminster, 37 Chapel Street, London NW1 5DP (tel. 0171 724 1143, fax 0171 723 8929). It is edited by Neil Orr (Health and Social Care Worker) and Catherine Flynn (User Involvement Project Worker) with support from Madlin Hewitt (Administrator). We welcome contributions. The deadline for material to be included in the next issue is June 17th.

Westminster Health and Social Care
Voluntary Action Westminster
July 1998

THE NHS AT 50

July 5 1948 brought the biggest health gains for ordinary people in Britain since the Public Health Act of 1848, when the introduction of water supplies and sewerage systems had dealt a major blow to the killer diseases of cholera and typhoid. This month fifty years ago saw the establishment of the National Health Service, described at the time by the British Medical Association as 'a comprehensive service for the entire community'[1]. In the midst of today's debates on rationing, eligibility criteria and the definition of community, it seems timely to revisit one of the major foundation stones of the welfare state.

The previous 'panel system' had been neither comprehensive nor for the whole community. It had provided free G.P. care for the working man, funded through National Insurance contributions, but had excluded his wife and children, and had not extended to hospital treatment. Under the new service, 28 million more people became entitled to medical treatment without the payment of fees, doubling overnight the numbers on G.P. lists. A leaflet was delivered to every household proudly proclaiming,

> 'The National Health Service will provide you with all medical, dental and nursing care. Everyone - including all visitors to this country whether of British nationality or not - can use it...There are no charges...'[2]

People would now be entitled to choose a family doctor and receive free maternity, dental, ophthalmic and hospital services, including operations. It would also be possible to access specialist services, such as deaf clinics or mental health care on the NHS, and drug treatments and appliances would be available free of charge.

At once people flocked to register with a G.P, have false teeth fitted after a lifetime of dental neglect, and their eyesight corrected by spectacles. Hundreds of thousands of pairs of glasses were dispensed in the first year of the NHS.

Familiar themes emerge

But almost immediately, the medical profession pleaded with the public not to expect too much too quickly. The BMA pointed out, 'no fairy wand was waved on July 5th...it is vital that everyone should understand the facts and not expect miracles'.

The service could not be a success, it was argued, unless the three parties concerned - health service workers, the Government, and the public - appreciated one another's difficulties.

BMA (1948):

. . . The service cannot be a success unless the three parties concerned help to make it so:—

The public's 'difficulty' was the need for better access to health services; the difficulty for the doctor was finding enough time to give every patient the care they needed; the Government, for its part, was left with the difficulty of finding adequate resources.

Advances in medical knowledge have transformed what it is possible to expect from a National Health Service. Yet despite 50 years of experience, resolving the problem of how to meet such competing demands remains the NHS' most enduring challenge.

Catherine Flynn (VAW)

[1] BMA leaflet, 'The New Health Service and You', September 1948.

[2] Ministry of Health NHS leaflet No. 2, 'The National Health Service', August 1948.

Primary Care Groups

KCW Health Authority has agreed the configuration of the new Primary Care Groups, the GP-led bodies that will be a key component of the reformed National Health Service from 1 April 1999 (see the May issue of this newsletter). It is proposed that there will be four PCGs in KCW, as follows:

- a PCG for North Kensington and Paddington (west of the Edgware Road);
- a PCG for North Westminster, based on the current Marylebone locality;
- separate PCGs for South Kensington & Chelsea and Victoria.

The proposed configuration still has to be approved by the NHS Executive Regional Office, and the viability of the Victoria PCG may depend on decisions by key local GPs.

More than 40 voluntary organisations attended a VAW briefing meeting on the voluntary sector and the new NHS on July 16th. John H. James (Chief Executive, KCW HA) and Sally Hargreaves (Director of Public Health, KCW HA) gave presentations on Primary Care Groups and the Health Improvement Programme, and there was a lively discussion. It was agreed to establish a VAW New NHS Working Group to provide a voluntary sector input into new health developments locally. If you are interested in participating please call Neil Orr (0171 724 1143).

Public Meeting - Funding Crisis at St Mary's NHS Trust

Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Community Health Council has called an emergency public meeting to discuss the future of health services provided by St Mary's after discovering that the Trust is £4.5 million in the red. Addressing the meeting will be John James, Chief Executive, KCW Health Authority, and representatives from the Board of St Mary's NHS Trust.

Date:	Wednesday 29 July 1998
Time:	6.30pm
Venue:	Isaac Newton Centre 108a Lancaster Road, W11
Further information:	CHC on 0171 706 7100

Mental Health Stocktake

Report by Rogan Wolf, Westminster Mental Health Consultation Project

On June 16th a 'Mental Health Stocktake' took place - a day for interested parties to get together and take stock of mental health services in Westminster, evaluate progress made in the last few years and look ahead to the next few years.

The event, funded by Westminster Social Services and KCW Health Authority, proved popular, attracting 106 people. Service users and carers were present in strength, as well as staff from all the main organisations, at every level. Maybe one of the main memories of the day for many people will be the buzz of talk in the breaks, the sheer liveliness of contact. You could almost hear the bridges being built.

Plenary talks were given by the chairs of the two user groups, the Director of Social Services and KCW's Director of Public Health. The conference then broke up into small workshops.

A theme for the day was 'looking after yourself'. Mental ill health is not an easy experience; neither is it easy day after day to keep helping others in great psychological distress. To find time to sustain yourself so that you can keep sustaining others is crucial. The theme was explored by one of the workshops. The day made an honest attempt to look after people, providing an aromatherapist for anyone interested, and live music in the breaks.

There were some disappointments. No G.P.s turned up. There was only one psychiatrist. We need to find a better way of bringing the small groups together again in the afternoon, once they've done their work. But overall people felt it was highly successful, with the proviso that it's crucial that ideas produced on the day are considered properly and responses given. The event will be repeated regularly as part of Westminster's consultation programme. A tantalising possibility is that it will engender a number of ongoing initiatives, led by small working groups that will report back to the wider stocktake assembly on a regular basis.

The stocktake can break down barriers, increase people's sense of involvement, offer a forum for new ideas and a real chance for people involved in the services to influence them. A valuable step forward.

Continued ☛

Extracts from address by Pat Kapellar, South Westminster User Involvement Group (SWUIG)

SWUIG was formed five years ago, when a group of users at the Gordon Hospital were encouraged to 'have a voice' in the community. We have meetings each Monday and quarterly meetings in the Gordon Roof Garden when we invite patients for discussion and refreshment.

After three years, SWUIG finally agreed with Riverside Mental Health Trust the Code of Conduct for Multidisciplinary Meetings. Members were particularly anxious for this Code to be introduced, remembering their own traumatic experiences. Eventually we hope it will be used throughout the country.

We are glad to have been instrumental in complementary therapy, which service users have found so beneficial. Unfortunately funding has been halted at the moment, but we hope it will be resumed very soon. We worked towards encouraging weekend services and have had great pleasure in seeing the benefits of having somewhere to go over the weekend instead of sitting within four walls.

Present needs and issues? We desperately need 24-hour Crisis Centres - somewhere to go when service users are feeling vulnerable - particularly during the night. SWUIG will use their every endeavour to work towards this project in the near future. 'Disregard' is something that urgently needs consideration by our Government. SWUIG will not pause in our endeavour to get the sum for working therapy increased to a reasonable amount. The present £15 is inadequate and has been unchanged for many years [this refers to the income mental health users can earn for therapeutic work before having their benefits cut - Editor's note].

Extracts from address by Rosemary McKay, Paddington Users' Group (PUG)

You will be surprised to hear that there are only 6 or 7 of us at our meetings, held once a fortnight at WAMH.

There is no fixed date when we realised the importance of our views on the way services were provided. We do now. Inch by painful inch we overcame obstacles and addressed problems which had never been taken into consideration before - because we listened.

An example of this was brought home to us by Rodney Lawson, a user. He came to a meeting and described the need for crisis cards in the Capital. He had executed the plans and designs himself and wanted our approval. We gave it and he produced 1,000 of these vital cards for users who took ill and had no other way of getting help. I carry one in my handbag all the time. PUG paid for these.

Derek, another user, came to us with what finally became the protocol for staff entering patients' individual sleeping areas, bedrooms, toilets and bathrooms. It was a simple measure which we drew up to afford the same privacy and dignity as in one's own home. Staff should enter their areas only as necessary in the performance of their duties. The Site Manager of the Paterson Centre signed the document and promised to review and update every 6 months.

Users were sick and tired of the Ward Round and wanted a code of behaviour from those who sat in on those notoriously difficult and demanding interviews for the patient. We provided a code of conduct and it has been accepted almost word for word by North West London Mental Health Trust.

Crisis services in the community is a 'hot potato'. It has long been my dream to have a service which is not necessarily run with standard mental health diagnosis and hospitalisation.

As Pam Jenkinson of Wokingham Mind says, 'the philosophy behind a crisis service was to think of everything bad in the conventional hospitals and then do the opposite'. Everything was taken care of in her crisis house, from the Andrex toilet paper to scented soaps, to pet animals, to a thousand pictures on the walls. No consideration is too dire to be considered essential.

These are very much ongoing projects, fulfilling to the users on these committees. It is a relief to users to rely on us to take up the torch and go on to light the flame of enlightenment. For too long the user has remained hidden in the hospital with no voice to change the structure of our mental health services.

Times have changed over the past 10 years and even now as I speak, we are organising protests against cuts in the extended day care service. Too much? Never too much. As long as there is a user in discomfort or pain, we their fellow users will be there to help make changes for the better.

HIV Consultation

KCW Health Authority are consulting on the future of HIV/AIDS Residential Care services for local residents. London Lighthouse will cease providing such services by the end of September 1998, and the Health Authority is therefore considering alternatives. Consultation will include a questionnaire for people with HIV/AIDS, and two public meetings:

• 7 August at 1:00 pm at the Migrant & Refugees Communities Forum, 2 Thorpe Close, W10 5XL (specifically for African service users).

• 11 August at 6:00 pm at London Lighthouse, 111-117 Lancaster Road, W11 1QT.

Further details from Peter Bradley, KCW Health Authority. 0171 725 3317.

Low cost safety equipment

Dutch Pot, the lunch and social club for African-Caribbean older people, is launching a low cost safety equipment scheme to help prevent accidents in the home. Equipment such as smoke alarms, bath mats and lightbulbs will be made available to older people at cost price at the Health Desk at Lisson Grove Health Centre and at the Dutch Pot itself. The scheme is being run in conjunction with KCW Health Authority and Parkside Health.

Details from Sonia Blackwood, Accident Prevention Worker, Dutch Pot Lunch & Social Club, 0181 960 4357.

Joint Finance Briefing

Joint Finance is KCW Health Authority funding for new and innovative projects allocated through the joint planning structure. The 1999/2000 joint finance pack, setting out the priorities for funding, will be sent out to voluntary organisations on August 5th.

A briefing meeting for voluntary organisations to explain how to apply for funding will take place on Thursday 13 August from 2:00 - 4:00 pm in Rooms 306/7, KCW Health Authority, 50 Eastbourne Terrace, W2.

Further details from Neil Orr at VAW (0171 724 1143) or Jubin Mama at KCW HA (0171 725 3318).

Direct Payments

Westminster Social Services has approved the further development of cash payments in lieu of services to individuals who have been assessed as needing community care services.

At its operational sub-committee meeting on 15 July, Social Services Committee heard that the pilot scheme, running since October 1997, had brought significant benefits to users. Four disabled people had been using the payment to employ their own carers. One had commented, 'I'm so glad I've changed. I decide who comes, when, what they do. It feels great!'

A comparison between the costs of meeting the needs of these individuals under the Direct Payments scheme and through conventional services delivery had shown annual savings of care costs of over £18,000 under Direct Payments.

The pilot had identified that users needed more support than was currently available to manage the practicalities of becoming an employer, and the Committee agreed to explore the potential of working with a neighbouring authority to commission support and development for the Direct Payments scheme. It was agreed that £14,000 of the savings already made would be used to fund a support service.

User Involvement in Staff Recruitment Seminar

Does your organisation involve service users or carers in staff recruitment? Are they there as advisors or as decision-makers? Is there a separate user/carer panel or do users and carers sit on the main panel?

Voluntary Action Westminster is organising a seminar on the subject, and would like to invite you along. It takes place on Tuesday 8 September from 10am to 12.30pm at VAW, 37 Chapel Street.

If you wish to attend, please contact Catherine Flynn on 0171 724 1143.

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Westminster Health and Social Care

Voluntary Action Westminster — August 1998

Joint Review of Westminster Social Services

As part of a rolling programme of joint reviews of social services departments in England, the Audit Commission and the Social Services Inspectorate are currently engaged in a review of Westminster Social Services.

The aim of joint reviews is to provide an independent assessment for local people of how well served they are by their local social services department. The review examines how well each authority:

- responds to individual people who need information or help;
- plans for its population as a whole;
- uses its resources.

The Reviews are high profile exercises. The results are published and positive and critical comments are typically reported in the national and social work press.

In Westminster, Social Services have submitted their Position Statement to the Review Team, setting out a profile of local needs and priorities and identifying achievements and deficits in the areas under review.

The Review will look at how authorities empower users and carers, offering choice and fully taking their views into account. This ethos is reflected in the review process itself. A questionnaire has been sent out to a sample of 350 users and carers asking their views on local social services. In October, the Review Team will be talking directly to a smaller number of users as part of its field work in local offices.

The Review will also look at the extent to which authorities have constructed partnerships with other agencies, including the voluntary sector. A range of local voluntary organisations will be invited to a meeting with the Review Team in September.

Voluntary organisations and others may also make written submissions of evidence direct to the Review Team. These should try and cover the eight key issues that form the core framework of the joint review approach:

1. How do Social Services help people find out what services are available, how to find them and what to expect?
2. How do Social Services respond when people first contact them?
3. How do Social Services assess what people need and agree this with them and their carers?
4. How do Social Services organise the response to needs?
5. How do Social Services ensure that the response is effective and continues to meet what individuals need?
6. How do Social Services ensure that policies, strategies and priorities are informed by the needs of the population?
7. How do Social Services demonstrate that they can respond effectively to change?
8. How do Social Services ensure equity, value for money and proper control in the use of resources?

- *Westminster Social Services Joint Review Coordinator is Philip Berechree (0171 641 1958).*

- *Written evidence should be submitted by the end of October to Dennis Simpson, Westminster Joint Review Team, 35-37 Grosvenor Gardens, SW1W 0BS.*

- *Westminster Race Equality Council will be making a submission to the Review Team on the needs of black and minority ethnic communities, as well as encouraging local groups to provide more detailed information on the specific experience of their own communities. Call Marium Nafisa, 0171 287 1157.*

Parents Support Groups: Children with Special Needs

Do you have a child with special educational needs, or a child who would benefit from extra help or opportunities at school? Would you like to meet other parents in similar position? Would you like help in understanding parents' and children's rights in education law and how to go about getting extra help and support or appealing against decisions which affect your child? Then come along to a meeting.

Disability Action Westminster are having two meetings run by parents for parents. The first is on September 22nd from 10.30am to 12.30 pm at Voluntary Action Westminster. The second will be an informal training day to help you put your point of view forward in reviews, statements and meetings with professional workers. This will be held on November 19th from 10am - 3pm (details from Phil Cordell, DAW, 0171 266 2143)

Running parallel to the DAW group is the Westminster Parents Support Group, which features outside speakers. Forthcoming meetings of this group, held at Westminster Council House, include:

- Monday 21st September, 11 am - 1 pm: Occupational Therapy services for children.
- Monday 12th October, 7 pm: Network 81 (this meeting will tell you about the support group and the new free counselling service for parents).
- Monday 23rd November: the Child Development Service Framework.

Not the only one! A Conference on Disability and Parenthood

Saturday 12th September, 10.30am - 4.30pm,
42 Westbourne Park Road, Paddington, W2.

Westminster Disability Services is a resource for people with disabilities. One resource is a group for parents with disabilities. At the moment we are a small group who meet for organised outings with the children and staff support. The group meets about twice a month.

We would also like to expand and network with other people and organisations. This is what the conference is about, to have a forum where people can meet.

The conference will include:

- discussions on how to cope with toddlers and teenagers;
- guest speakers from Westminster Disability Services, Parenthood International, Parentability and other organisations;
- activities for children and an opportunity for the children to have a voice;
- lunch and refreshments provided.

If you have any queries or questions regarding either the conference or the parent group, please don't hesitate to contact Caroline Young (tel. 0171 641 5710, fax. 0171 641 5711, text. 0171 641 5711, e-mail. pdbu@westphysdis.demon.co.uk). Conference places should be booked by August 31st.

Relatives Association

The Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster Relatives Association Group is for relatives and friends of older people living in residential and nursing homes locally, whether in the public, independent or voluntary sectors. The Group holds regular meeting with guest speakers. Forthcoming events include:

- Wednesday September 30th , 6 pm to 8 pm, Care Plans: how care needs are met for each resident. Two home managers will lead the discussion: Cindy Baker (Charlwood House) and Mary Rice (Delves House).
- Wednesday November 11th, 2 pm to 4 pm, Visiting residents in long term care: sharing ways of making your visit positive, especially when residents have memory and communication problems.

The venue for both meetings is Charlwood House, Vauxhall Bridge Road SW1 (0171 828 7377). For further information contact Cynthia Heymanson, London Development Worker, 0171 916 6055.

Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority Local Voices Events

As part of its Local Voices work listening to local communities , Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority have arranged two events in September, one in Marylebone and one in Queen's Park.

Your local Health Authority invites you to a Community Health Day in Marylebone

Friday 4th September 1998
10 am - 2 pm

Seymour Leisure Centre
Seymour Place
London W1H 5TS

Do you live or work in Marylebone?

Would you like information on local health services and on NHS developments?

Would you like information on healthy eating followed by a healthy lunch?

Plus information on stress management including free demonstrations of hand massage!

If you would like to attend please contact Catherine Flynn, User Involvement Worker, Voluntary Action Westminster (0171 724 1143) or Fidelma Carter, Community Liaison & Development Manager, KCW Health Authority (0171 725 3442).

• This event will feature feedback on the Marylebone Local Voices Project undertaken jointly by KCW Health Authority and Voluntary Action Westminster. This project involved mapping the community groups in the Baker Street and Bryanston wards and seeking their views on local health services. Meetings were held with eight local groups (104 individuals).

Issues raised included problems registering with local GPs, long waiting times for GP appointments, lack of information about out of hours services and problems with obtaining repeat prescriptions.

We want to hear what YOU think are the issues that impact on health in Queens Park

Thursday 10th September 1998
10 am - 1:30 pm

WECH Community Centre
Harrow Road
London W2 2HX

Queens Park has some of the highest levels of ill health in Westminster. The death rate from all causes is three times that found in Knightsbridge or Belgravia, and the ward also has the highest death rates from heart disease and lung cancer.

Westminster Healthy Alliances Joint Planning Team have set up a North Paddington Working Group with representatives from KCW Health Authority, Westminster City Council, Voluntary Action Westminster, Parkside Health and Queens Park Family Service Unit.

The government has announced that National Lottery funding is to be set aside in a special New Opportunities Fund to develop healthy living centres across the country. We are considering submitting a proposal to develop a healthy living centre in Queens Park.

To enable us to do this we would like to consult local health professionals and community and voluntary workers in and around Queens Park area about their views.

The morning will include some brief presentations and there will be an opportunity to discuss a way forward in groups. Lunch will be provided.

If you would like to attend please contact Sheron Pusey (Locality health Promotion Manager) on 0171 725 3414.

CHC Election Results

VAW have been undertaking the 1998 election of Voluntary Sector representatives to Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Community Health Council. Local voluntary organisations were invited to elect two representatives from a list of ten candidates. The results were as follows:

Name of candidate	Votes
David Leonard (St Mungo's)	32
Stewart Ritchie (Carers Network Westminster)	21
Loraine Miller (English Churches Housing)	17
Evelyn Ratcliffe (Sixty Plus Group)	16
John Anthony Hillman (Salvation Army)	15
T.O.Olaleye-Oruene (Olabisi Olaleye Foundation)	15
Eddy Aroda (Uganda Youth Support Group)	12
Atique Tooman (Visually Impaired Persons' Group)	8
Zuriash Amare (Ethiopian Refugee Help Line)	4
Robin Hitchcock (West. Deaf User Group)	4

The elected representatives were therefore David Leonard (St Mungo's) and Stewart Ritchie (Carers Network Westminster).

The CHC would like to thank all those who took part in the election. Although only two people could become formal members of the CHC, it is hoped that some of the other candidates who expressed an interest might be able to get involved in other areas of the CHC's work.

KCW CHC have a new acting Chief Officer. You can contact Steve Hardisty on 0171 706 7100.

World Mental Health Day

KCW Health Promotion are distributing free campaigns pack to support activities on World Mental Health Day, 10 October 1998. The pack will include a poster, postcards, and fact sheets suitable for a display.

If you would like a pack please contact Cynthia Clerk, Health Promotion Campaigns Officer, 0171 725 3430.

VAW Health and Social Care Worker

Neil Orr, Voluntary Action Westminster's Health and Social Care Worker, will be leaving at the end of August to take up a new position as Children & Families Policy Officer at Southwark Community Care Forum.

VAW are therefore seeking to appoint an experienced worker to continue and develop the work of our Health and Social Care Project. The Project aims to develop and support the participation of the voluntary sector in the planning and provision of health and social care in Westminster. At a time of exciting new opportunities for the voluntary sector, this post offers the opportunity to have a significant influence on the development of health and social services through working with a wide range of organisations and agencies at every level.

Salary: £22,170 (inc. ILW) + 6% contribution to pension.

For further details please contact Madlin Hewitt (0171 724 1143).

Keeping in Touch

Do you publish a newsletter?
Do you want to let other people know about it?

Voluntary Action Westminster's Health and Social Care Team are again updating **Keeping in Touch: a Directory of Newsletters and Networking Groups for Westminster**. This directory has proved invaluable to voluntary groups and other organisations since it was first published in 1996.

If your organisation publishes a newsletter or other regular publication, please send a copy to VAW with details of the number of editions per year and a contact name for enquiries. Alternatively if your newsletter has been included in the previous **Keeping in Touch Directory**, could we ask you to let us know of any amendment details. Please contact Madlin Hewitt on 0171 724 1143.

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